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WHAT IS TRUTH ?

After painting by Gay 1896

WHY WE FAIL AS CHRISTIANS

BY

ROBERT HUNTER

AUTHOR OF

"POVERTY." "VIOLENCE AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT,"

"SOCIALISTS AT WORK" "LABOR IN POLITICS," ETC.

New York

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PREFACE

ACCEPTING the second great commandment—we must love others as ourselves—as fundamentally necessary to a Christian's life, I have endeavored in this volume to consider all that obedience to it involves, and especially what the consequences would be to any man in present society who attempted to obey that commandment implicitly. I have sought to point out some of the obstacles which blocked the path of one really great spirit, who, with incredible perseverance, energy and devotion, strove to follow literally this teaching of the gospel and to become a worthy follower of Jesus. I mean Leo Tolstoy, who in his life and in his art labored for thirty years to be a meritorious expression of the Christ spirit.

Needless to say, I am not attempting here a comprehensive study of Christianity. Anyone who undertook to limit its scope to the relations between men, or to the problems of society, would lay himself open to just and serious criticism. There is something in Christianity for every soul; there is in it light for everyone in distress of mind and comfort for everyone in distress of body. There is no phase of life that Christianity fails to touch; and, therefore, we see scientists, psychologists, sociologists, theologians and men of every other conceivable intellectual, spiritual and social interest go to it as to a rich and inexhaustible quarry which never fails to reward them for their labor in working it. In this volume only one vein is followed, and yet it may prove the most valuable of all. It may be that here we shall find the precious metal from which all others are derived. That we must love others as ourselves is, to be sure, the second, not the first, com-

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mandment; but did not St. John tell us, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

Nor is Tolstoyism in any complete sense my theme. There are tenets in his faith that I have not touched upon. Nonresistance and perfect chastity are perhaps the two most important. When I was with him at Yásnaya Polyâna in 1903, he took me into his study just before my departure, and there endeavored to impress upon me that, in his opinion, the two cardinal virtues were voluntary poverty and nonresistance. Tolstoy also considered bread-labor, a vegetarian diet, temperance, service, meditation, celibacy and prayer as essential to the Christian life. The Tolstoyism that is dwelt upon here is his literal interpretation of the gospels, the emphasis he laid upon love of one's neighbor and his strenuous effort to live the perfect Christian life.

Tolstoy failed, not because of his own weakness, vices or lack of faith, but because of the hostility of everyone about him and the obstructive power of established social and economic institutions. And the causes of his failure lead the author to consider this question: Is a Christian society necessary to the success of Christianity? If it is not possible in present society to love others as ourselves, then it is certainly necessary—and the first duty of Christians—to establish a new society wherein the commandments of Jesus can be obeyed. May it not be that we fail because as Christians we have accepted that world—that social system—toward which Jesus says we must be hostile? Even the Church which was to be the refuge of those opposed to "this present evil world" (Gal. i, 4), now accepts its subsidies. It has become one of the strongest bulwarks of competitive society with its many inequities, and even in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany it fought to the end against any change in the social structure. Consciously

and unconsciously, then, is not the Church and are not we striving to perpetuate the very economic and social conditions which choke the life out of the divine spirit?

That any Christian should seek to preserve an unjust society is inexplicable and inexcusable, because Jesus in many places in the gospels makes it perfectly clear that certain social and economic conditions are absolutely essential for the germination, growth and full-flowering of Christianity. It cannot thrive in some places: it can not live at all in certain other places. It can only grow in the very best soil. That the "world" is its enemy is made clear in many texts. It knoweth us not. . . . Love not the world. . . . The cares of this world choke the Word. . . . Not as the world giveth give I unto you. . . . And Jesus said to his judges, "My kingdom is not of this world." In every case the term, the world, is used as a contrast to the ideal society established by Jesus. And while the term refers to the dominate society and competitive system which existed at that time, it is in all its essential features exactly the same society and economic system which prevails to-day. Upon the statement of the Master himself, Christianity must fail in such an environment. His seed was then falling on barren ground, as it is to-day.

There is, to be sure, a something which is called Christianity that has been adopted by the Kaiser, the militarists, the imperialists and the plutocrats, and it succeeds in material greatness, pomp and grandeur; but to what a state of world disaster has it brought us? How repulsive and blasphemous it seemed coming from the mouth of the supreme war-lord! How is it possible that he could find one word in the gospel to comfort his soul or sustain him in his monstrous course? What is this Christianity that soothes his conscience? Is it the cactus that grows upon the barren plain, and, being devoid of every good quality and covered with ugly thorns, appeals to his perverted

soul as a thing of beauty? Is it some product of the seed that Jesus sowed upon a soil that was too barren to permit it to live except in this cruel and frightful form?

I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. This is the promise of the Master. Yet here we are hungry and thirsty in a war-torn world; and shall we have nothing but this cactus for food and drink? Surely something has gone wrong. Is it not possible that we have given to the precious seed only a stony and barren soil in which it could not survive except by changing its essential being; and that it now lives as a repellent and useless exotic, capable neither of satisfying hunger, nor of assuaging thirst? It is possible, perhaps, that if given a friendly soil and a wholesome environment the seed which became this hideous thing might yet become the food of man and his earthly and heavenly salvation. It may be that the world in which we live—this society to which we all cling so fondly—is *the* deadly enemy of the truly Christian life.

These are some of the questions and problems which are considered in this book. And the answer to them all seems to be found in the society that Jesus and his disciples established and lived in during the three years of his ministry. It was a new social and economic system—wholly unlike that of the world; it was the kingdom of God on earth. It was a just and humane economic system. It was a soil in which the divine seed could grow. It was a body suited to the sublime spirit of the word of God. It was an earthly temple wherein men could worship God and love each other in word and in deed. It was a society where men could serve each other in every act of their daily lives. Although the apostles tried valiantly to continue the new order after the crucifixion, the world soon crushed the new kingdom and Christianity became an exotic, struggling feebly for life at times, full of fire and hope at other times, in an en-

vironment which abhors it and strives to crush it. The conclusion at which the author arrives in this volume is that the changing of this environment is the first and most pressing duty of Christians. They must first seek to establish the kingdom of God on earth. As the Lord's prayer instructs us, that must be the chief task of every day.

No one could, of course, be insensible of the criticism that is certain to fall upon anyone who essays to interpret the gospel in his own way. Being neither a scholar nor a clergyman, I have not familiarized myself with the multitude of interpretations which have been made, not only of the gospel as a whole, but even of nearly every word and phrase of the gospel. Consequently, I shall expect and welcome criticism and correction from those to whom this work has been a life study. Yet I cannot help feeling that Jesus was capable of making his thought clear and that any earnest mind, who patiently and carefully studies the New Testament, will get his message. This is perhaps an unwarranted assumption that might give support to the heretical thought that it is unnecessary for those who can themselves read the gospels to look at them through the eyes of the Church, of Luther, of Calvin or of Mrs. Eddy. Certainly I have not done so and consequently the Pre-millenarians, the interim-ethical theorists, the Christian Scientists and the many other sects will, if they take any notice whatever of such an adventurous person, observe that I have not taken into account the particular verses that may support their widely divergent interpretations of the divine word. And to this criticism I enter no protest. I have found one much needed message in the gospel—the plan of a new society that Jesus bequeathed to his disciples; and I believe that in this society the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount may prevail and that there only can we obey fully the commandments of the Master.

. . . . . .

It is a pleasure to take advantage of this opportunity to express my gratitude to several of my friends who have taken the trouble to read and criticize the manuscript; and among these I must thank Miss Jane Addams, Mr. Lincoln Steffins, Mr. Fremont Older and Mr. John D. Barry. The Reverend Doctor C. M. Addison, of St. John's, Stamford, Conn., the Reverend Doctor Edward L. Parsons, of St. Mark's, Berkeley, Cal., the Reverend Norman M. Thomas, of the American Parish, and Professor William Frederick Badè, the Old Testament scholar, not only read the manuscript with care but offered me many valuable suggestions. To my ever helpful wife is due the special appreciation of one who finds her aid and inspiration a constant source of strength.

ROBERT HUNTER

Berkeley, California,
January 1, 1919.

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PART I

WHY WE FAIL AS CHRISTIANS

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS TRUTH?

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

THIS Jesus said to Pilate; whereupon "Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?" And then, neither seeking nor waiting for an answer, Pilate left Jesus. He was, in reality, replying contemptuously to Jesus and stating the conviction of all worldly men. Great minds in the Roman and Greek world had tried to answer that unanswerable question. Always and everywhere learned men sought *the* truth without finding it. The scornful skepticism of Pilate is vividly shown by N. N. Gay, the Russian painter, in a picture which created an immense sensation in Russia when it was first exhibited. When Tolstoy saw it, he was so agitated that for days he could hardly speak of anything else. "That fat, shaven neck of the Roman Governor," he writes, "that half-turned, large, well-fed, sensual body, that out-stretched arm with its gesture of contempt . . . it is alive. It breathes, and impresses itself on the memory forever." (1) Facing Pilate is the witness unto the truth, "the worn-out sufferer who has undergone, during the night, arrest, judgment, and insults." (2) Is it likely that anything could have appeared more incredible to Pilate than that this wretched person before him could answer the question that has forever troubled the world? Although this was nine-

teen hundred years ago, he who attempts to answer that question to-day, even by the use of the gospels, opens up old interminable discussions.

There is hardly a point at which one can approach religion without awakening dissension. Endless theological discussions are aroused by any statement of religious faith; and many centuries of disheartening dissensions have arisen over creeds that contain hardly one word that Jesus uttered. It is rare for two men to take even the simplest words of Jesus and agree exactly upon a common interpretation. One will say that a certain sentence should be taken literally; another will maintain that that sentence is figurative. The plainest commandment that one accepts as clear, decisive, final, another will question because somewhere in the gospel other thoughts appear in contradiction. When one seeks a definite moral basis for life and goes to the gospel to find it, others confront him with phrases and clauses that contradict, if they do not actually undermine the basis chosen. The confusion is great, not only among individuals but also among the many sects and denominations. Hundreds of thousands of books have been written upon the various interpretations of Christianity, and tens of thousands of priests are engaged most of their time in the effort to spread among men their various and often antagonistic conceptions of the religion of Jesus. Although there have been nearly two thousand years of such controversy, all is still confusion; and the world itself, without great injustice, might now be pictured in the form of Pilate, saying as it hurries on, "What is truth?"

Notwithstanding all this confusion and uncertainty, millions of people believe that Jesus was the Son of God and that he came for a time to live among men to teach them the true life and to be the means of their salvation. Many of them also believe that the Bible was inspired and that not a word of it can be changed without doing violence to

the will of God. At the same time, incredible as it must appear, they do not know exactly what Jesus meant them to do. Before the freeing of the blacks one could receive no satisfying answer to the question: Can a Christian own slaves? And one receives to-day no satisfying answers to such questions as these: Can a rich man be a Christian? Is it permissible for a Christian to receive rent for his land and his houses or interest on his money? Shall a Christian take thought for the morrow and for the material needs of himself and of his family? May a Christian go to war? Can man be saved by faith alone? These are but a few of the many, many vital questions that Christendom does not answer. Indeed it seems altogether too willing to leave them unanswered. Yet Jesus came to "bear witness unto the truth," and was—how significant the expression—the "Word of God." Why is it then that we do not know the truth? Why is it that we do not understand what we are to do? We are, to be sure, stupid and ignorant. But Jesus knew this and must have felt that he—the Son of God—could overcome even our stupidity and ignorance and drive into our poor heads a knowledge of the truth. Otherwise, why should he have come? If his teachings are beyond our vision and what he meant us to do beyond our power, why then should he have come to us at all? Surely it is impossible to believe that Jesus was in truth the Son of God and at the same time to admit that he failed to make himself understood and was therefore forever prevented from accomplishing the one thing above all others which he came to do.

Little less satisfying is the situation of those who doubt the divinity of Christ, who look upon him rather as a great philosopher and teacher of exceptional purity of soul and nobility of character and who think of him as the greatest of the great, superior in spiritual and mental vision to Socrates, Confucius, and Buddha. They do not believe

that every word of the gospel was inspired. They do not doubt that Jesus has been misquoted and that copyists have inserted many things in the gospels which Jesus never uttered. They believe that many of those who took down the words of Jesus were incapable of understanding all he meant to say, and that in this way and other ways errors have crept into the writings, which account for what appear to them to be certain contradictions and obvious absurdities. Yet they acknowledge Jesus as a great teacher and know that even as a lad, he possessed such a rare gift of expressing his thought, that he could go even among the elders and silence them. He could talk to the most ignorant and illiterate—indeed, most of his disciples were illiterate—and make himself understood. He also debated with the cunning lawyers and the learned scribes of his time, and not only was he a master of clearness, directness and simplicity, but he had a wonderful talent for explaining any unfamiliar thought by some striking analogy or parable. One of the signs that enable us to recognize the few great men who have lived in the world is this: they are nearly always able to state in clear, simple and concise language what they want to convey to the world. As we look into a clear pool and discern every detail of its sandy bottom, so may we often look into the minds of really great men. Considering Jesus, then, merely as a great man and as a great teacher, is it conceivable that he should have been incapable of telling us with perfect clarity what we should believe, how we should live, and what we should do in order to be true Christians?

The question answers itself. No one who reads the gospels thoughtfully and sympathetically will maintain that Jesus—whether God or man—was incapable of making himself completely understood. We must therefore seek for a better explanation of the confusion that exists among the avowed believers in the divinity of Christ, as well as

among those who deny the divinity of Christ. As we all know, there is much in the gospels that we can read and talk about and even believe without having it interfere in any radical manner with our way of life, but there is also much in the gospels (and this, too, we know) that we cannot believe without having it interfere in every manner with our way of life. As a result something of this sort happens. Whatever in the gospel will not interfere with what we like to do, or feel we must do, we gladly believe; and to the rest we close our eyes. Most of us do this half-unconsciously, perhaps, but in our innermost selves we can hardly help knowing that we are not Christians, and that there is in the gospel something fundamental—a vital message, an essence—which we do not *wish* to understand.

Even those who confess this to themselves are not always led to look more deeply into the Scriptures, because they are afraid that this fundamental something will upset them, trouble them and hurt them. None is, of course, so blind as he who will not see, and if we do not wish to understand, and if, like Pilate, we are not sincerely seeking an answer, is it not more than probable that we shall remain forever in darkness? But it must not be forgotten that if we love darkness rather than light, it is because our deeds are evil. Or perhaps it is better to say that we do not sincerely seek the truth because we are without faith that the truth will set us free. In any case there seems to be a widespread fear amongst us that if we should fully understand Jesus, we should then have to live differently—so very differently—make many sacrifices and change radically not only our lives, but even the social and industrial bases of the world in which we live.

CHAPTER II

HOW TOLSTOY SOUGHT THE TRUTH

"Thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry."

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

ONE man there was who did not love the darkness. He yearned for the light. With all his soul he yearned for the light. He feared only falsehood and he loved only truth. He believed that the truth would set him free; and this faith of his was so strong that it made him fearless and great, so fearless and so great indeed that all the world took notice of him and everywhere—in India, in China, in America, and throughout Europe—sensational stories were printed in magazines and newspapers of the strange deeds of Count Leo Tolstoy. He had become a Christian and was going to put into practice the entire program of Christianity. From the highest to the lowest, the world was all attention. It was not that Tolstoy had entered the church, or had changed from an agnostic to a believer. These things happen too frequently in society to be noticed by the press. What interested the press and what particularly interests us is Tolstoy's dramatic, and in modern times almost unique, effort to obey literally the commandments of Jesus. There were at that time other men and women who were attempting to lead lives of self-sacrifice. There were many missionaries going into foreign countries, cheerfully accepting privation and suffering. There was Father Damien, a Catholic priest, who went to live among the lepers, knowing that death there awaited

him. There were settlement workers and physicians who were giving up ease, health and life in their service to mankind. Arnold Toynbee, Jane Addams, Dr. E. L. Trudeau, and many others were devoting their lives to the aid and comfort of suffering humanity. These men and women and their activities aroused attention, but they proved nothing like so interesting to the world as the news that a wealthy nobleman, and the most famous novelist of Russia, had determined *to do* the things which Jesus commanded in the Sermon on the Mount. None of the others sought exactly what Tolstoy sought. They were endeavoring to serve their fellow-men, but not necessarily to live the perfect Christian life. They did not feel it necessary to give everything away, nor to become vagabonds, nor even to do manual labor in order to support themselves. Moreover, they were not noblemen, nor were they unusually rich or famous, nor had they large families. They were for the most part earnest men and women engaged in comparatively commonplace activities, highly estimable but not singular, sensational and revolutionary as the activities of Count Tolstoy unquestionably were.

The story of Tolstoy's effort to become a Christian is not only unusually interesting, it is also authentic. We have a narrative of all his experiences; of his first doubts and questionings; of why he was led to seek the truth, and of where he found it. We have the story of his mental suffering, of the struggles with his surroundings, of the problems that arose in his family. There is not an essential fact left out. We do not know the struggles of any other modern character so intimately as we know those of Tolstoy. We have what might be called a moving picture of Tolstoy's mind and soul for thirty years of his life, when he was seeking with tragic earnestness to perfect his life and to do all things in harmony with the teachings of Jesus.

There are not many who will deny that Tolstoy was one

of the greatest men of our time. He was an indefatigable student and was very learned. His knowledge of the literature of all times and of all countries was extraordinary. He was well read in ancient epics and mythologies; yet he was no less familiar with the latest writings of the most decadent of the French. He astonished one by quoting from some obscure American, whose writings are almost unknown to his own countrymen, and from him Tolstoy might turn to discourse on the literature of the early Semites and Chinese. All religions interested him, and he might have written much invaluable commentary upon comparative religions. He was not especially interested in politics, social science, or economics; yet he wrote, when occasion arose, freely and readily, though not always clearly, upon these subjects. Metaphysics and philosophy, art and music also held his interest and attention. If we accept Matthew Arnold's definition of culture, Tolstoy was perhaps the most cultured man of our age. Moreover, he seemed to know men. The human soul interested him far more than books, and in his writings he was able to make men and women live. The wonderful array of characters in his novels and dramas is eloquent testimony of this. He sounded the depths of passion. He laid bare and interpreted the innermost thoughts of saint and sinner, of nobleman and peasant, of capitalist and laborer, of Czar and revolutionist. His pictures of tender, simple, sweet maidens and of the most abandoned and hardened prostitutes are ever memorable. This was the work of Tolstoy—a master artist. In the acquisition of knowledge, in the interpretation of men's souls, in his wide and varied creative art, Tolstoy's life was but partially expressed. The story of his struggles and passions, of his weakness and vice, including every secret of his innermost life, was given to all mankind. He was forever writing his own biography. He was forever dwelling upon his own moral and spiritual

problems. He lived and suffered in every struggle of his characters, and whether he was writing of saint or sinner, he was writing of his own soul. His was anything but a simple mind. He had a morbid conscience; and a dual being which was constantly playing one part against the other. Given to introspection, he would sit for hours watching the sensations of his own soul: laughing, scorning, approving, condemning his own self. One heart was always battling with another heart. In constant mental and spiritual turmoil, he was always striving to find a firm, rational foundation upon which he could build his thought and life. He was a vain man, who never missed an opportunity of humbling himself. He was a good man, who could not resist maligning himself. He was a great artist, who despised his art; and he was a learned man, who thought that most learning was useless. Although a nobleman, he lived much like a peasant. He loved every refinement, including perfume and fine linen; yet he worked in the manure of stables, cobbled old boots, and eagerly turned his hand to any foul thing that needed to be done. Inheriting great power through land, he voluntarily became landless.* Possessing great talent as an artist, he devoted much of this talent to the writing of religious tracts, while he turned his physical energies into manual labor. Although a soldier, he became a nonresistant; and although indifferent to religion the greater part of his early life, he became in his old age like a little child with its hands raised in prayer to God.

Nearly all of Tolstoy's writings are in some sense autobiographical. In 1852 he began his literary career by publishing "Childhood" and two years later "Boyhood," where in Irteneff we have a description of Tolstoy's early life. Of the period when he, having left the university,

* *Cf.* footnote, pp. 51–52.

was trying to improve the condition of the serfs on his estate at Yâsnaya Polyána, we have a description in "The Morning of a Landlord." Of the next few years, which were largely spent in idleness with a circle of his aristocratic friends, Tolstoy tells us in the "Notes of a Billiard Marker." Suffering a moral revulsion from the shallow and trivial existence which he was then leading, he entered military service, and his extremely interesting experiences in a Cossack village are related in his novel, "The Cossacks." Later, he took part in the siege of Silistria and afterward in the battle of Balaklava, and this part of his life is told in his powerful Sevastopol sketches.

After his return from Sevastopol, "he was received," Kropotkin says, "with open arms by all classes of society, both literary and worldly, as a 'Sevastopol hero' and as a rising great writer. But of the life he lived then he cannot speak now otherwise than with disgust: it was the life of hundreds of young men—officers of the Guard and *jeunesse dorée* of his own class—which was passed in the restaurants and *cafés chantants* of the Russian capital, amidst gamblers, horse dealers, Tsigane choirs, and French adventuresses." (1) But Tolstoy was never a hardened sinner. Always after giving way to some of his worst debauches, he was overcome with remorse. His inner pain was excruciating. His torment was unendurable. One of his friends, to whom he confessed his sins, once wrote: "He would tell me all: how he had caroused, gambled, and where he had spent his days and nights; and all the time, if you will believe me, he would condemn himself and suffer as though he were a real criminal. He was so distressed that it was pitiful to see him." (2)

Quickly succeeding such a state of remorse, there often came a new debauch. He stayed with Tourgênef in St. Petersburg for a short time after his return from Sevastopol, and Tourgênef described Tolstoy's life to a friend in these

words: "Sprees, gipsy-girls and cards all night long—and then he sleeps like a corpse till two in the afternoon. At first I tried to put the brake on, but now I've given it up, and let him do as he likes." (3) Years later Tolstoy wrote of this period in "My Confession": "I cannot now recall those years without a painful feeling of horror and loathing. I put men to death in war, I fought duels to slay others, I lost at cards, wasted my substance wrung from the sweat of peasants, punished the latter cruelly, rioted with loose women, and deceived men. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, murder. . . . There was not one crime which I did not commit, and yet I was not the less considered by my equals a comparatively moral man." (4) This severe self-condemnation was not deserved. Tolstoy puts the worst possible interpretation upon some of his acts and when he speaks of robbery, he means, of course, that he profited by the labor of the peasants, and when he says murder, he means that he killed men in war.

At thirty-two Tolstoy was married and for nearly twenty years he remained almost without interruption upon his estate near Toûla. This was the most joyous and in many ways the most richly productive period of his life. During this time he produced his two great novels, "War and Peace" and "Anna Karênina." His married life was exceptionally happy, and the Countess's brother, Behrs, writes, "The nearness, amity and mutual love of the couple were always a model to me, and the ideal of conjugal happiness." * (5) During these years ten children were born to them, and the Count simply reveled with delight in his

* Merejkowski, Dmitri. "Tolstoi as Man and Artist," p. 22. This and several quotations used later, were taken from Merejkowski before I obtained a copy of Behrs' recollections which have been translated into English by Charles Edward Turner and published under the title, "Recollections of Count Leo Tolstoy," by C. A. Behrs (William Heineman, London, 1893).

domestic relations and at the same time he pursued with boundless energy and enthusiasm his work on the estate and his literary projects. He said later that he wrote novels simply as a means of improving his material position and during this time he was of the opinion that "there was only one truth, that you must live in such a way as may be best for you and your family." He delighted in the productivity of his estate and he had a passionate fondness for his horses, pigs, nurseries, apiaries, wine presses, spirit distilleries, and all those things which signified to him a richly productive nature. Love of life seemed to run at this time almost unrestrained in Tolstoy and Behrs writes of this period: "Leo every day praises the day for its beauty, and often adds, quite in the spirit of the great heathen, 'How many riches God has! With Him, every day is set off by some beauty or other.'" (6) "The wondrous dawn," Tolstoy writes, "the bathing, the wild fruit, have put me in the state of mental languor which I love; for two months I have not stained my hands with ink, or my mind with thinking. It is long since I have delighted in God's world as I have this year. I stand gaping, wonderstruck, afraid to stir for fear of missing anything." (7)

Even during this period, however, he was not without question as to his wider social responsibilities and in "Anna Karênina," written at this time, Levine reflects concerning the management of his property: "This matter is not merely my own personal concern, but the common welfare is at stake. There ought to be a radical change effected in the management of property, and particularly in the position of the lower classes. Instead of poverty, there should be general comfort; instead of hostility, concord. In a word, a bloodless revolution, yet the greatest of revolutions, at first within the narrow bounds of our district, then spreading over the Province, over Russia, and over the world." (8) However, like many wealthy Russians of this period—typi-

fied in literature by his own Pierre and by Tourgênef's Rudin—Tolstoy did not act, although he was often tormented by doubts and questionings concerning his moral and social duties. If he arrived at any definite moral conclusions during this period, it is not unlikely that the explanation for his failure to live in accordance with them is given in the words of Nicolai Rostov, who says in the beginning of "War and Peace": "It is all sentimentality and old wives' fables, all this good of one's neighbour! I want our children not to be vagabonds on the face of the earth; I want to secure and protect the existence of my family so long as I am alive; that is all!" (9) But the moral doubts and questionings would not be put down, and after this long period of domestic delight, they came again to torment him in an even more determined way. Indeed, they took possession of him and during the late seventies and early eighties worked a profound change in Tolstoy's moral and religious beliefs.

At the summit of his fame, Tolstoy became more and more disturbed mentally until, at times, he was on the point of committing suicide. Before finishing "Anna Karênina," he began to realize how shallow and meaningless was his own life, and in "My Confession," he says: "It was then that I, a man favoured by fortune, hid a cord from myself lest I should hang myself from the crosspiece of the partition in my room, where I undressed alone every evening; and I ceased to go out shooting with a gun lest I should be tempted by so easy a way of ending my life. I did not myself know what I wanted. I feared life, desired to escape from it; yet still hoped something of it.

"And all this befell me at a time when all around me I had what is considered complete good fortune. I was not yet fifty; I had a good wife who loved me, and whom I loved; good children, and a large estate which without much effort on my part improved and increased. I was respected

y. my relations and acquaintances more than at any previous time. I was praised by others, and without much self-eception could consider that my name was famous. And ıot only was I not insane or mentally unwell; on the conrary, I enjoyed a strength of mind and body such as I ıave seldom met with among men of my kind: physically . could keep up with the peasants at mowing, and mentally . could work continuously for eight to ten hours without :xperiencing any ill result from such exertion. . . . The question which at the age of fifty brought me to the verge of suicide was the simplest of questions lying in the soul of every man, from the foolish child to the wisest elder. It was a question without answering which one cannot live, as I had found by experience. It was, What will come of what I am doing to-day, or shall do tomorrow? What will come of my whole life? . . .

"It had seemed to me that the narrow circle of rich, learned, and leisured people to whom I belonged formed the whole of humanity, and that the billions of others who have lived and are living were cattle of some sort—not real people. . . . And it was long before it dawned upon me to ask, 'But what meaning is, and has been given to their lives by all the billions of common folk who live and have lived in the world?' . . . I instinctively felt that, if I wished to live and understand the meaning of life, I must seek this meaning not among those who have lost it . . . but among those billions of the past and the present who know it, and who support the burden of their own lives and of ours also. . . .

"And I began to draw near to the believers among the poor, simple, unlettered folk: pilgrims, monks, sectarians, and peasants. Among them, too, I found a great deal of superstition mixed with the Christian truths; but their superstitions seemed a necessary and natural part of their lives. . . . And I began to look well into the life and faith

of these people; and the more I considered it, the more I became convinced that they have a real faith, which is a necessity to them, and alone gives their life a meaning and makes it possible for them to live. . . . I saw that the whole life of these people was passed in heavy labor, and that they were content with life. . . . While we think it terrible that we have to suffer and die, these folk live and suffer, and approach death with tranquillity, and, in most cases, gladly.

"And I learned to love those people. The more I came to know their life the more I loved them, and the easier it became for me to live. So I went on, . . . and a change took place in me which had long been preparing, and the promise of which had always been in me. The life of our circle, the rich and learned, not merely became distasteful to me, but lost all meaning for me; while the life of the whole labouring people, the whole of mankind who produce life, appeared to me in its true light. . . . And I remembered that I only lived at those times when I believed in God. As it was before, so it was now; I need only be aware of God to live; I need only forget Him, or disbelieve in Him, and I die. . . . 'What more do you seek?' exclaimed a voice within me. 'This is He. He is that without which one cannot live. To know God and to live is one and the same thing. God is life. Live seeking God, and then you will not live without God.' And more than ever before, all within me and around me lit up, and the light did not again abandon me.

"And I was saved from suicide. . . . And, strange to say, the strength of life which returned to me was not new, but quite old—the same that had borne me along in my earliest days. I quite returned to what belonged to my earliest childhood and youth. I returned to the belief in that Will which produced me, and desires something of me. I returned to the belief that the chief and only aim of my

life is to be better—that is, to live in accord with that Will. And I returned to the belief that I can find the expression of that Will, in what humanity, in the distant past hidden from me, has produced for its guidance: that is to say, I returned to a belief in God, in moral perfecting, and in a tradition transmitting the meaning of life. . . .

"I turned from the life of our circle: acknowledging that theirs is not life but only a simulacrum of life, and that the conditions of superfluity in which we live deprive us of the possibility of understanding life. . . . The simple labouring people around me were the Russian people, and I turned to them and to the meaning which they give of life. That meaning, if one can put it into words, was the following: Every man has come into this world by the will of God. And God has so made man that every man can destroy his soul or save it. The aim of man in life is to save his soul; and to save his soul he must live godly, and to live godly he must renounce all the pleasures of life, must labour, humble himself, suffer, and be merciful. . . ."

Even before Tolstoy arrived at this solemn conclusion he had begun to re-translate the four gospels. He searched the earliest manuscripts to obtain the words of Jesus in their most unadulterated form. He knew Greek, but he now felt the need of Hebrew. He sought out a rabbi in Moscow and astonished him with his great zeal and with the rapidity with which he learned to read the language. Together they read the Old Testament up to and including Isaiah, and also much of the Talmud. "In his tempestuous striving after truth," says his tutor, "he questioned me at almost every lesson about the moral views in the Talmud, and about the Talmudist explanations of the Biblical legends." (10)

These studies preceded that remarkable series of religious writings which engaged Tolstoy for the rest of his life and which included theological and philosophical treatises, con-

troversial pamphlets, evangelistic leaflets, peasant stories, fables, plays, novels—all intended to teach the meaning of life as Jesus gave it to the world. He first published his "Criticism of Dogmatic Theology"; later, his "Union and Translation of the Four Gospels," "The Gospel in Brief," "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," etc. He then began to write stories and parables, intended for the peasants—all of which set forth the teaching of the gospels. "His eyes are fixed and strange," writes his wife, "he hardly talks at all, has quite ceased to belong to this world, and is positively incapable of thinking about everyday matters. . . ." He "reads, reads, reads . . . writes very little, but sometimes says: 'Now it is clearing up,' or, 'Ah, God willing, what I am going to write will be very important!'" (11) Later, the Countess writes to her brother, Behrs: "If you could know and hear dear Leo now! He is greatly changed. He has become a Christian and a most sincere and earnest one." (12) Behrs also comments upon the remarkable change, telling us: "The transformation of his personality which has taken place in the last decade is in the truest sense entire and radical. Not only did it change his life and his attitude towards mankind and all living things, but his whole way of thinking. Leo became throughout his being the incarnate idea of love for his neighbor." (13)

While seeking his true relation to the infinite, Tolstoy was also seeking his true relation to mankind. In 1881, after living many years in the country, he came to Moscow. He began immediately to seek out the poor and made regular visits into the very lowest and most wretched sections of Moscow. The sight of town poverty depressed him terribly, and he tells us repeatedly that he invariably had a sense of having committed some dreadful crime when he beheld misery, cold, and hunger. "I realized," he says, "not only with my brain, but in every pulse of my soul,

that, whilst there were thousands of such sufferers in Moscow, I, with tens of thousands of others, filled myself daily to repletion with luxurious dainties of every description, took the tenderest care of my horses, and clothed my very floors with velvet carpets!" (14) His first impulse was to give, and he gave money with both hands, but to his utter dismay, he soon discovered that this did not seem to help the poor. "The majority of the poor whom I saw," he writes, "were wretched, merely because they had lost the capacity, desire, and habit of earning their bread; in other words, their misery consisted in the fact that they were just like myself." (15) As he found no one whom he could help with money except one starving woman, he was forced to the conclusion that with money he could never reform that life of misery which these people led.

Tolstoy's work in the slums also taught him that all his own money came from the poor,—that they had produced all the wealth he possessed—and consequently he saw himself as one who first takes away much from the workers and peasants, and then gives them a little in return. This "philanthropy" or "charity" he describes as "taking away thousands with one hand and throwing kopeks with the other." (16) "No wonder I was ashamed," he says. "But, before beginning to do good, I must leave off the evil, and put myself in a position in which I should cease to cause it. But all my course of life is evil. If I were to give away a hundred thousand, I have not yet put myself in a condition in which I could do good, because I have still five hundred thousand left." (17)

Never satisfied until he had thought all about and through every problem that confronted him, he was led on and on by his rigid logic until he came to feel himself a burden on the back of the poor—a burden that was crushing them down to destruction. "It is," he says, "as if I were sitting on the neck of a man, and, having quite crushed him down,

I compel him to carry me, and will not alight from off his shoulders, while I assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him, and wish to ease his condition by every means in my power except by getting off his back." (18) This conclusion seemed to Tolstoy inexorable. "I came to that simple and natural conclusion," he writes, "that if I pity the exhausted horse on whose back I ride, the first thing for me to do, if I really pity him, is to get off him and walk." (19) He realized all that this meant to him and to his class. He must cease being a parasite on labor, a nonproductive member of society, and, therefore, he says, "In order to avoid causing the sufferings and depravity of men, I ought to make other men work for me as little as possible, and to work myself as much as possible." (20) Past the middle period of life, habituated to the enjoyment of luxuries, petted by a devoted wife, possessed of large wealth, surrounded and attended by many servants, he now faced the necessity of a radical revision of his living habits.

Accosted one day by a beggar, Tolstoy gave him a few pennies, and, when the beggar had gone, he thought over his action. He felt that he should have given not only the money he had with him, but also the coat from off his shoulders, and all that he possessed at home. "Yet I had not done so," he writes, "and therefore felt, and feel, and can never cease to feel, myself a partaker in a crime which is continually being committed, so long as I have superfluous food whilst others have none, so long as I have two coats whilst there exists one man without any." (21) Through just such commonplace actions as almsgiving — Tolstoy was led to the root of things—to all that it means in life to love one's neighbor as oneself—and he concluded that "there is no other love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend. Love is love only when it is the sacrifice of one's self. Only when a man gives to

another, not merely his time and his strength, but when he spends his body for the beloved object, gives up his life for him,—only this do we all acknowledge as love; and only in such love do we all find happiness, the reward of love. . . . A mother who nurses her child gives herself directly, her body, for the nourishment of the children, who, were it not for this, would not be alive. And this is love. Exactly in the same manner does every laborer for the good of others give his body for the nourishment of another, when he exhausts his body with toil, and brings himself nearer to death." (22)

Once Tolstoy's thought became fixed upon this problem of true Christian love, he turned it over and over in his mind. It fascinated him, and he decided that "in order to love others in reality and not in word only, one must cease to love one's self also in reality and not merely in word. In most cases it happens thus: we think we love others, we assure ourselves and others that it is so, but we love them only in words, while ourselves we love in reality. Others we forget to feed and put to bed, ourselves—never. Therefore, in order really to love others in deed, we must learn not to love ourselves and to put ourselves to bed, exactly as we forget to do these things for others." (23) It is especially easy in our time to forget others, largely because of the conditions in modern society. In various ways we hide ourselves from the poor and distinguish ourselves from them. We cultivate all sorts of refinements, in food, in dwellings, in cleanliness, in manners, and in education. We build stone houses about ourselves and walls and gardens. We seek other parts of town or go into the country. We avoid the streets in which the poor live and have carriages and conveyances of all types and descriptions to keep us from contact with the poor. If it were not for these ways of separating ourselves from our fellow-men, we could not so readily forget them. How vividly in many

places Tolstoy brings these facts home to us, but nowhere perhaps more effectively than in these words: "Let the most hard-hearted man sit down to dine upon five courses among hungry people who have little or nothing to eat except black bread, and no one could have the heart to eat while hungry people are around him licking their lips. Therefore, in order to eat well, when living among half-starving men, the first thing necessary is to hide ourselves from them, and to eat so that they may not see us. This is the very thing we do at present." (24)

In seeking what to do, Tolstoy was materially helped by a remarkable workingman, Basil Soutaieff, who was actually following as perfectly as he knew how the example of Jesus. Dreaming over and commiserating with the sorrow and poverty of the world, this uneducated artisan obtained by chance a copy of the gospels, which he began to study with avidity. One day he carried to a priest the body of his young son for burial. The priest demanded fifty kopeks for the ceremony; but Soutaieff had only thirty. Whereupon the priest began to bargain with him over the corpse. Soutaieff indignantly took up the body of his child and buried it in his own garden. From that time Soutaieff despised the Church and denounced it for its venality and want of spirituality. Leaving his work in the city, he went into the country, and, "with no wish to found a new sect, he became, by example as well as by precept, the teacher of a religion of universal love and pity." (25) When asked, "What is truth?" he answered with conviction, "Truth is love in a common life." (26) When his devotion to the unfortunate, the hungry, and the needy became known to Tolstoy, it had a profound influence upon his thought and eventually worked an entire transformation in his manner of living.

Another workingman, named Bóndaref, was also of immense practical help to Tolstoy, chiefly through his re-

markable book, "Industry and Idleness." It could not be published in Russia, but Tolstoy obtained it in manuscript, this being the way in which interdicted books were often widely circulated. Bôndaref seeks to find not merely what is good and necessary, but which of all the good and necessary things in existence comes first in importance, and he concludes that the chief and primary duty of man is pointed out to him in the Old Testament by God himself when he said to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Bôndaref insists that the "chief, primary, and most immutable" law for humanity is that every man must earn his own bread with his own hands. "Bread-labor," as thus understood, includes "all heavy rough work necessary to save man from death by hunger and cold," and this "bread" includes, of course, "food, drink, clothes, shelter, and fuel." (27)

Tolstoy greeted the book of Bôndaref with boundless enthusiasm and writes with delight: "However strange it may seem at first that such a simple method, intelligible to everyone, and involving nothing cunning or profound, can save humanity from its innumerable ills, yet more strange, when one comes to think of it, must it seem that we, having at hand so clear, simple, and long familiar a method, can, while neglecting it, seek a cure for our ills in various subtleties and profundities. Yet consider the matter well and you will see that such is the case. . . . All the ills of humanity—except those produced by direct violence—come from hunger, from want of all kinds, from being overworked, or, on the other hand, from excess and idleness, and the vices they produce. What more sacred duty can man have than to coöperate in the destruction of this inequality—this want, on the one hand, and this temptation of riches on the other? And how can man coöperate in the destruction of these evils but by taking part in work which supplies human needs . . .?" (28) If men would but do

their own "bread-labor," it would simplify all life. It would overcome poverty and it would make great riches impossible. Men would not be separated into classes, hating each other. One could not do hard, rough labor and remain delicate in body, with soft, white hands, nor would one require delicate and luxurious foods, beds, furnishings. "Bread-labor," says Bóndaref, "is a medicine to save mankind. If men acknowledged this first-born law as an unalterable law of God—if each one admitted bread-labor (to feed himself by the work of his own hands) to be his inexorable duty—all men would unite in belief in one God and in love one to another, and the sufferings which now weigh us down would be destroyed." (29)

As the world has rarely heard such teachings since the days of the Apostles and the early Christian Fathers, Tolstoy seemed to consider Bóndaref as the discoverer of a new truth which he eagerly accepted as fundamental to a just life. He therefore not only undertook to do his own "bread-labor," but he urged upon his wife that she and the children undertake to do their "bread-labor." In a letter on education, written to a friend, he emphasized the point that children must be taught above all things to do hard and productive labor. They must be taught to be ashamed from the very beginning to use and profit by the labor of others. "Let them do all they can for themselves: carry out their own slops, fill their own jugs, wash up, arrange their rooms, clean their boots and clothes, lay the table, etc. Believe me that, unimportant as these things may seem, they are a hundred times more important for your children's happiness than a knowledge of French, or of history, etc. It is true that here the chief difficulty crops up: children do willingly only what their parents do, and therefore I beg of you, do these things." (30) In this same letter, Tolstoy points out how early the seeds of hypocrisy are planted in the mind of a child. Everything

about him points to the fact that there are two classes—masters and slaves. "And however much we may talk to him in words about equality and the brotherhood of man, all the conditions of his life, from his getting up, to his evening meal, show him the contrary." (31)

Finding support for his new gospel in these words of Ruskin, "It is physically impossible that true religious knowledge, or pure morality, should exist among any classes of a nation who do not work with their hands for their bread," (32) Tolstoy concludes that a believer in the teaching of Jesus will not ask what he is to do. Love, when it once becomes the motive-force of his life, will surely and unerringly show him where to act, and what to do first and what afterwards.

"Not to speak of indications Christ's teaching is full of, showing that the first and most necessary activity of love is to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and help the poor and the prisoners,—our reason, conscience, and feelings all impel us (before undertaking any other service of love to living men) first to sustain life in our brethren by saving them from suffering and death that threaten them in their too arduous struggles with Nature. That is to say, we are called on to share the labour needful for the life of man—the primary, rough, heavy labour on the land." (33)

Thus, from a new angle, Tolstoy arrives at the same fundamental conception of the true Christian life, which he had first acquired from the New Testament, and he pleads with renewed zeal: "Go to the bottom—to what seems to you the bottom, but is really the top—take your place beside those who produce food for the hungry and clothes for the naked, and do not be afraid: it will not be worse, but better in all respects. Take your place in the ranks, set to work with your weak, unskilled hands at that primary work which feeds the hungry and clothes the naked:

at bread-labor, the struggle with Nature; and you will feel, for the first time, firm ground beneath your feet, will feel that you are at home, that you are free and stand firmly, and have reached the end of your journey. And you will feel those complete, unpoisoned joys which can be found nowhere else—not secured by any doors nor screened by any curtains. You will know joys you have never known before." (34)

Contrary to every tendency which, in modern society, leads to the separation of men and classes, Tolstoy beseeches us to go to those in hunger and distress, to share their manual labor and even the greatest extreme of their poverty. Things as they are cannot be endured, and if men are to be Christians, they must be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. "To be poor," he writes, "to be humble, to be a tramp— . . . this is what Christ teaches; without this it is impossible to enter the kingdom of God, without this it is impossible to be happy here on earth." (35) This is, indeed, the ultimate, and for the rest of his life Tolstoy was firmly convinced that this and this only was the perfect way. Nothing else could be Christian. No compromise was acceptable. Those who would live according to the teachings of Jesus must give up everything. Tolstoy was not unaware of the fact that such a life would lead to self-annihilation and he drew hastily the consequences of so perfect a life in some unfinished notes in his diary, which have been printed under the title, "The Demands of Love."

He imagines two well-to-do people who decide that they will rid themselves of their superfluities and go to live among some peasants in a little village. True to their habits, they seek order, comfort, and especially cleanliness, and so, after buying a hut, they clear it of insects, paper it themselves, and install not luxuries but only the most necessary furniture. At first others are suspicious of them, but soon they are subjected to all kinds of demands. All the poor of the

village and of the neighborhood seek aid of them till at last they see that they can only keep for themselves the barest of necessities—for instance, a glass of milk. But then they remember that a neighbor has two unweaned babies who can find no milk in their mother's breast and a two-year-old child who is on the verge of starving. They think it necessary to keep a pillow and a blanket so as to sleep as usual after a busy day, but they know a sick man lying on a coat full of lice, who freezes at night. They would like to have kept tea, but had to give it to some old pilgrims who were exhausted. They must, they feel, keep their house clean, but beggars come and are allowed to spend a night and to breed lice again. This is almost unendurable; but where is one to stop responding to the demands of love? Having worked all day, they return home. Having no longer a bed or pillow, they sleep on some straw, and after a supper of bread, they lie down to sleep. It is autumn. The rain is falling, mixed with snow. Someone knocks at the door. Should they open it? A man enters, wet, and feverish. What must they do? Let him have the dry straw? There is no more dry, so either they must drive away the sick man, or let him, wet as he is, lie on the floor, or give him the straw, and themselves share it with him. But if they do this, they will get from him lice and typhus. Nor is this all. A man comes, who is a drunkard and a debauchee, whom they have helped several times and who has always drunk whatever was given him. He begs now for three roubles to replace money he has stolen and used for drink, and if he does not return it, he will be imprisoned. They have only four roubles, which they need for a payment due the following day, but shall they let the man they call a "brother" perish rather than suffer themselves? How is one to act in such cases? They could let the fever-stricken man have the damp floor and lie in the dry place themselves—and they would be farther from

sleep than the other way. They could refuse the three roubles, but to refuse would mean to turn away from that for the sake of which one lives. The unescapable conclusion is that he who would live the Christian life in modern society has "no path but that of struggle and sacrifice—and sacrifice till the end. . . . Only *that* is real love, which knows no limit to sacrifices—even unto death." (36)

It is difficult to find elsewhere in literature anything approaching the philosophy of Tolstoy. Since the early Christian era few men have seen Christianity in the light that Tolstoy sees it. His words bear a marked similarity to those of Chrysostom, Jerome, and Gregory the Great. Without the mysticism of St. Francis, they carry the same message. In recent centuries the only near spiritual relative of Tolstoy is the English poet, who, in the fourteenth century, in the form of Piers Plowman, preached religious ideas so strikingly like those of Tolstoy that, even at the expense of what may appear a digression, we must not pass them over in silence. Despite the separation of five hundred years of progress in civilization, the philosophy of these two preachers of individual righteousness is almost the same. They are both individualists and they seek individual, not social, regeneration; or at any rate, if they contemplate any form of social regeneration, it is to be attained only through the perfection of the individual. It is significant that one must go back so many years to find an analogy to Tolstoy, and it is perhaps also significant that the one, who, five hundred years ago, preached a philosophy so akin to that of Tolstoy, should be now almost unknown.

It has been noted that Tolstoy's writings are largely autobiographical, but whether the same can be said of the author of Piers is not known. The one who gave us this epic of toil and of human regeneration may have been picturing an abstraction, or he may have been giving us

the product of his own life's struggle. In any case, the seer of this vision of regenerated mankind pictures himself as undergoing a spiritual transformation very similar to the one experienced by Tolstoy. Like Tolstoy, Piers was led to enjoy the present to the full, while youth and animal feelings were strong. He ignored the deeper spiritual things and cared not to reason concerning life. He was led to worldly pleasures by two fair damsels of Fortune—Concupiscentiacarnis and Covetousness-of-the-Eyes—until, like Tolstoy, he was recalled from his error by the approach of Old Age.

The approach of old age and the fear of death lead the dreamer to a profound reasoning concerning the meaning and the aim of life. In the quaint allegory of Piers, he is led by Nature to a mountain, which represents the world, and he is shown how all other animals but man follow Reason. He is informed that all his doubt and anxiety are brought upon him for contending with Reason and suffering himself to be led astray by Fortune. He is then led to consider the social evils and to observe the difficulties which stand in the way of rich men who are desirous of entering the kingdom of heaven. In pursuit of light, he seeks out Clergy, but, while dining with him, he is so confused by his tangle of theological discussion and so shocked by his inordinate gluttony, that he turns from him to seek elsewhere the solution of life's problems. He wants to know more of a certain Do-well, and in seeking him, he finds Piers, the Plowman, who possesses the garden in which the tree of Charity grows.

Both Piers and Tolstoy lament the same social vices; both condemn the wastours or propertied classes. (37) Piers speaks of the workers as those who "played full seldom; in setting and in sowing toiled full hard, and won that which wastours with gluttony destroyed." Both point to the simple, toiling, God-fearing peasant as one

expressing the ideal of the Christian life and service. Both advise poverty; not "the hypocritical poverty of the Friars," but the poverty of the producing, laboring peasant, earning his own sustenance. Both are convinced that the worker, by the very nature of his life and work, knows Truth and follows Charity and both would have mankind emulate the rugged, natural virtues and works of the peasant. Both preach against the corruption in the church and the wickedness and knavery of the priesthood, and both, in the name of Jesus, make their appeal not only to Agnostics but also and especially to church members to become converted, to order their lives in accord with the teachings of the Savior, and to open their hearts to the word of God.

As the great mediæval poem typifies the working class in Piers and deifies him, so Tolstoy's writings emphasize a similar conviction. The gigantic figure of the Plowman, fresh from the fields, spiritually enriched by the poverty, the toil, and the consecrated service of productive work, is called to lead mankind—the nobles, the knights, the wastours, the clergy even—to Truth, and he begins by teaching them all to work with their hands in the fields. This is a picturesque mediæval rendering of the most important theme in Tolstoy's philosophy. The Worker leading us, teaching us the Christian life, the sweetness of service, the reality of human brotherhood, and the sane spirituality which flows from contact with the earth in productive labor—these are among the most favored of Tolstoy's views. Both Piers and Tolstoy lead us to the same source of inspiration and from thence conduct us to the same goal.

In the progress of the Pilgrim in his search for Truth, in his effort to learn the meaning of life, and in the unfolding of his Vision, we are constantly reminded of Tolstoy and the growth of his spiritual life. The similarity is so marked, indeed, that one can almost imagine that one is reading in

Piers Plowman a quaintly allegorical and mediæval poetical version of Tolstoy's life. During his last few years Tolstoy was occupied by a continuous pilgrimage to all fountains of knowledge, to all systems of religions, and to all manner of men in pursuit of Truth. He could not find it in the Church, nor in Science, nor in Art, nor among the rich, nor among the learned. But he did find it in the lives of the lowly and the suffering—in the Doukhobors, in Soutaieff, in Bôndaref, and in Jesus, the carpenter. Strikingly alike are these two seekers of truth—the one in the fourteenth century in England, and the other at the end of the nineteenth century in Russia! Seeking Do-well, they both find Charity, which is love, among the workers in poverty, and coming to know what love means, they are both led to perceive the meaning of the life of Christ.

CHAPTER III

HOW TOLSTOY TRIED TO LIVE THE TRUTH

"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!"
"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

UNLIKE many other philosophers and writers, Tolstoy not only sought the truth and wrote extensively upon his findings, but he felt that he must strive with his whole being to live the truth, as he saw it. He was more than a philosopher, or writer, or preacher; he was a crusader with the aims of a savior. And he knew that his writings would not make one Christian unless he himself put into daily practice the moral principles he advocated. "Now I have become convinced," he wrote his wife, "that only one's life can show the path; only the example of one's life . . . it alone gives a real impulse. Example is the proof of the possibility of Christian . . . life under all possible conditions." (1)

With great earnestness and in all sincerity, Tolstoy endeavored during the last years of his life to follow two difficult Christian precepts—To love your neighbor as yourself; and to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." This meant, of course, that he must change not only his own life, but also that of his family and throw everything into confusion. He felt that he must give up his luxurious habits, produce his bread by the sweat of his own brow, and live the life common to the poorest of his peasantry. Undaunted and without faltering, he put his axe to everything that held him to his

former life. Although accustomed to smoke and to drink, he gave up both habits, and although extremely fond of shooting, he abandoned this sport. He ceased riding horses, and even when his family went to Moscow, which was one hundred and ninety-five versts from his country house, he made the journey on foot. He liked rich foods, but in pursuit of his ideal, he became a strict vegetarian. He declined to permit the servants in his household to do anything for him. He cleaned and dusted his own study, made up his own bed, cut his own wood. He went to the pump for his own water and carried it to his room for his bath. He sought the assistance of a shoemaker and learned how to cobble and make shoes. He also plowed the fields, cut timber, built huts for the peasants, and reaped and harvested the grain. For a time he gave to everybody that asked of him. He ceased writing novels and instead wrote tracts, parables, and stories, intended to spread a knowledge of the gospels. He refused to copyright all his later writings in order not to make them in any sense his personal property.

These radical innovations in the life of Tolstoy attracted hundreds of truth-seekers, and many interesting and delightful descriptions have been written of the period, at the Tolstoy estate, when "Counts, Princes, teachers, and all sorts of blue-blooded people tried to work in competition with the peasants. Scythes hacked awkwardly, mowing the sappy grass. Every one strove to outdo the others. As far as eye could reach, workers were seen everywhere. All the peasants were there, and so was the Countess in a Russian dress; children and governesses—we all helped to turn the hay. The hunting dogs lay around, and a specially hot sun shone on the smiling meadow. In the distance, on one hill was seen the village, and on another, the Count's house." (2) In these days there were as many divergent views of Tolstoy and of what he was attempting to do as

there were persons who came to visit him. Some of these were casual visitors and curiosity-seekers, often wholly unsympathetic and ununderstanding, who conveyed a totally erroneous impression of his ideas and his life. And while many of their descriptions of the altered life of Tolstoy are interesting, none of them makes quite the same appeal as that written by one of his former school boys, who later became a cabman in Toûla.

"In the 'eighties I heard wonderful things about Leo Nikolâyevitch, from some of my mates from Yâsnaya Polyâna: how he had become a simple working-man, a ploughman, a mower, a sower, a woodsman, a stovebuilder, a carpenter, and a bootmaker. All peasant-craft came naturally to him. The tales my mates told me were surprising. My good friend and schoolfellow, Ignât Makârof, said to me, 'You would not know Leo Nikolâyevitch as he is now, Morôzof! You remember when we were at school? He was good to us then; but now he is still better, and is so to everybody. You should just see how he works: how he ploughs, how he mows! You know how strong he is! Why, if the horse were too weak, you might harness *him* to the plough! And how he works with us in the village! He is not afraid of the illnesses that are about—not even of cholera. That's how we have trained him. . . . He even boasts about his work.' 'Ah, Ignât,' he says, 'I was quite done-up yesterday, but how well I slept!' And I say to him, 'The sleep itself is worth working for.' And he, 'Yes, yes, Ignât! That's true!' . . . You should drive over to Leo Nikolâyevitch's, Morôzof. He would be glad to see you; he often asks: 'How is Morôzof getting on?'—You come, and we will call on him together, and he will give us some books. I have already had many good books from him.'

"My soul felt light and joyful after this talk with my friend, who understands goodness as I do.

"So I got ready to go to Yásnaya Polyána, to visit my relations and see Leo Nikoláyevitch. Hardly had I got there and put up my horse, when my eighty-year-old aunt came running out and began telling me how hard it was for her to live in this world.

"'I have nothing,' she said, 'not a stick of my own. But the Count be thanked, and God give him health! He stands up for us forlorn ones; he has brought in my hay, and carted the manure, and ploughed the fallow, and done the sowing. God give him health and strength! . . . And see now! He is rebuilding our homestead. He brought the timber himself. . . . The old hut was ready to fall in on us altogether. . . .'

"After a chat with my aunt, I went to see Leo Nikoláyevitch the carpenter. I did not go near at once, but stopped where I could not myself be seen, to watch them. I stood admiring their work. Dear me! What had become of Leo Nikoláyevitch? Hair and beard are quite grey, and he has become wrinkled . . . he has grown old. But look how he sits astride on the top beam, cutting out a place for the cross-rafter to fit into! His shirt-sleeves are turned up, his unbuttoned shirt shows his bare chest; his hair is dishevelled. The locks in his beard shake at each blow of the axe. He has a chisel stuck in his girdle behind, and a hand-saw hangs from his waist. . . .

"After seeing Leo Nikoláyevitch at his work as a carpenter, I had a talk with him which still remains in my mind.

"For me, the meaning of 'Count' and his 'His Excellency' has quite gone: but the idea of Daddy Leo the carpenter, Daddy Leo the ploughman, the mower, the oven-builder, have become quite distinct. And his words about goodness remain with me. 'Let me not waste the short time left me! To-day I am alive; to-morrow, in my grave.'

"I became attached to Leo Nikoláyevitch with my whole soul, and often planned to get an interview with him. He

was always repeating, 'Love and goodness,' and praising country life, labour, healthy appetite and sound sleep." (3)

Hard, manual labor revealed many things to Tolstoy. As soon as he began to do regular physical work the greater part of his luxurious habits and wants, which were so numerous when he had been physically idle, disappeared. He no longer felt the need of the same refinements in food, in bedding, in clothes, and in baths. In fact, these things became embarrassing and impossible. He no longer cared for sweet, rich, complicated and highly spiced foods, but instead was more than content with sour cabbage soup, porridge, black bread, tea with a bit of sugar. His changed life revealed to him the fact that newspapers, theaters, concerts, parties, balls, cards, magazines, novels are inventions made for sustaining the mental life of man outside of its natural condition of labor; while many hygienic devices and medical inventions, in the way of food, drink, dwellings, ventilation, warming of rooms, clothes, medicines, mineral waters, gymnastics, electric and other cures are only necessary when one seeks to sustain one's bodily life outside of its natural condition of labor. (4)

These discoveries were agreeable; but Tolstoy had another motive for doing hard, physical labor. He felt he was giving an example to others of a better life and, in urging his admirers to do likewise, he was led to speculate on what it might mean to the world if manual labor should once become the practice of all sincere Christians. "What will come," he questions, "out of the circumstance that I, and another, and a third, and a tenth man, do not despise physical labour, but consider it necessary for our happiness, for the calming of our consciences, and for our safety? This will come of it,—that one, two, three, ten men, coming into conflict with no one, without the violence either of the government or of revolution, will solve for themselves the problem which is before all the world, and which has

appeared insolvable." (5) This has the same spirit and revolutionary intent that one finds in the life of St. Paul and later in the monastic orders. St. Paul earned his living most of the time by hard labor and constantly reminded his converts that they must not defraud each other, but love one another and work with their own hands. The same rule of life is applied by the laws governing the early monastic orders. For instance, St. Benedict in his Monastic Rule, issued about the year 630, commanded the monks to "live by the labours of their hands; as did also our fathers and the apostles." (6) Moreover, they must own absolutely nothing: "neither a book, nor tablets, nor a pen. . . . All things shall be common to all. . . . 'Let not any man presume or call anything his own.'" (7) Benedict excepted from the rule of manual labor only feeble or delicate brothers, but ordered that even they should not be permitted to be idle. Tolstoy was not a communist, but the other monastic rules of St. Benedict embrace almost the entire moral program of Tolstoy.

However, the rules of St. Benedict were intended to govern the lives of single men, but Tolstoy had a wife and many children. He was able to do a great deal without interfering with the lives of others, but when he tried to change the life of his family, he met with many obstacles. Not wishing to force them to do what he considered right, he had to content himself with pleadings and persuasions. He urged his children to quit their university studies and go out and learn of the peasants how to do useful work. He tried to persuade his wife to permit him to give away every penny of his possessions, to leave their large house, and to live in a peasant's cottage, where together they could share the manual labor of a small farm. The Countess was a most devoted wife but in this she could not follow her husband. She was a very practical woman, and she could not bring herself to believe that the teachings of

Christianity required her to forsake the property of her children and to bring them up as manual laborers without an education. She became terrified at the change in her husband and all sorts of misunderstandings arose between them.

She well describes her own attitude in a letter to one of her friends: "He is a leader: one who goes ahead of the crowd, pointing the way men should go. But I am the crowd; I live in its current. Together with the crowd I see the light of the lamp which every leader . . . carries, and I acknowledge it to be the light. But I cannot go faster, I am held by the crowd, and by my surroundings and habits." (8) Terribly torn between what her husband demanded and what she felt she owed to her children, fearing that the large property they possessed would be given away, and hoping that her husband, who had radically changed his views many times in life, might again change his views and regret any hasty and ill-considered action he might take, she struggled valiantly in opposition to him. She was forced to manage the estates, see to the education of the children, and revise, print, and publish her husband's works. Tolstoy, on the other hand, "began to live," says Behrs, "as if he had no estate or property, refused to receive any income himself from it, or to profit by it in any way." (9) "*He tries to shut his eyes,*" writes Anna Seuron, once a governess in the Tolstoy family, "and is wholly absorbed in carrying out the programme of his life. He does not wish to see money, and, as far as possible, avoids taking it in his hands, and never carries it about him." (10)

As the months and even years went on, with neither of them yielding to the other, the gap between man and wife grew wider and wider, and Behrs writes: "I have noticed that he is inclined to be more exacting, and seems to be displeased and hurt that she persists in opposing his wish

to abandon his worldly possessions, and continues to educate her children after the old fashion and spirit. In her turn his wife believes that she is right in so acting, and is grieved at the hard necessity of having to thwart his dearest wish. She has been the secret witness of all his spiritual struggle, and has with anxiety watched the gradual development into full growth of his religious and social creeds. No wonder if, at times, they have filled her with a feeling of disquietude, and she has feared their baleful influence on the health and well-being of her husband. This feeling, in spite of herself, for a while generated an aversion to his creed, and a dread of its results. . . . Between husband and wife an ever-widening discordance betrayed itself, and made itself felt in mutual recriminations as to the position each had taken up towards his creed, the one point on which there ever was the slightest disagreement or misunderstanding." (11)

In the struggle between Tolstoy and his wife there is much to be said for the position taken by the Countess, and this, too, is well put by Behrs, who, although an ardent admirer of Tolstoy, appreciated the unhappy situation of his sister. "To divide their property," he says, "among strangers, and to cast her children penniless on the world, when no one else is ready or willing to do the same, she not only considers impossible, but believes it to be her duty as mother to oppose any such scheme to the uttermost. When speaking to me on this subject, she exclaimed, with tears in her eyes, 'It is hard for me now, since I have now to do all myself, whereas before I needed to be only his aid and helper. The education of the children, the care of the property, all has fallen on my shoulders. And then I am blamed for transgressing Christ's law of love and charity! As if I would not readily do all he wishes if I had no children; but he forgets all and everything for the sake of his creed.'" (12) The Countess had to suffer all the trials

which it is said the wife of every artist and genius must suffer and, in addition, some of those that must come to the wife of any man who tries to follow literally in modern society the teachings of Jesus.

As time went on, Tolstoy's differences with his family became more and more serious, and he often felt himself a stranger in his own household. He lived like a common laborer among those who were spending his money to supply themselves with all the comforts and many of the luxuries of modern life, and he thus became a living rebuke to his family and naturally caused them all much anguish. Not wishing to oppose his wife by force, he could change nothing, and his property, as it appeared to him, continued to be wasted and his peasants to be exploited. He was so deeply affected by the falsity of his position that he tried again and again to bring himself to leave his family, but he always weakened at the moment of going. He continued, therefore, reluctantly, to live surrounded by luxury, though not partaking of it. He felt so keenly the opposition of his wife and children that he was led to believe what he said repeatedly—that the institution of the family was one of the greatest obstacles to a truly Christian life, and he often recalled the words of Jesus, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." He dwelt much upon this verse. Some of his conclusions as to the limitations often placed upon a Christian by family life are dealt with in *The Kreutzer Sonata.*

In order to explain fully the contradictory and even disastrous situation in his own household, he wrote the remarkable drama, "The Light Shines in Darkness." This is perhaps the only instance in literature of a great writer putting his autobiography into dramatic form. Tolstoy pictures himself, his family, their relatives and friends in a

spacious country house, quarreling over the problems of life and the teachings of Jesus. Here we are shown how many and great the difficulties are, under present conditions, of being such a Christian as Tolstoy had in mind. It is only because so few seriously try to become such Christians that so few realize how overwhelming those obstacles are. In many of his biographical writings Tolstoy makes clear that, in pursuit of a virtuous life, he had to struggle hard with his own nature, habits, and animal passions, and had to overcome early training and education; but in this drama he shows that, in attempting to be a Christian, he had to battle constantly, often bitterly, with his own family, with the Church, and with all the social, economic, and political conditions and institutions that surrounded him. In the opinion of some high authorities, Tolstoy was a great dramatic writer, and every reader knows that he was at his greatest in literature when he dealt with the problems of his own soul.

It is always risky to mix fiction and established fact. Just as historical novels constantly stray from the truth, so in many of his writings Tolstoy, when dealing with the problems of his own life and the characteristics of his own personality, breaks off without warning to introduce alien elements. This is true of "Boyhood," "Youth," and many of his earlier writings, but "The Light Shines in Darkness" seems to be a very accurate portrayal of much that occurred in the Tolstoy household toward the end of Tolstoy's life. At any rate, some of the characters and many of the situations are true to life, and the drama explains to us as nothing else could what Tolstoy wished to do, as well as what he actually did. It is Tolstoy's view of himself, of the obstacles that confronted him, and of the darkness that surrounded him.

The play revolves around Nicholas, the head of the house, who is endeavoring to live the truly Christian life. He is

discussed and misunderstood by nearly everyone, and the play begins with his wife, her sister, and her sister's husband lamenting the fact that if Nicholas continues in the way he is going, their large property will be wasted and the family beggared. "I understand Liberalism, County Councils, the Constitution, schools, reading-rooms, . . . as well as Socialism, strikes, and an eight-hour day;" says the brother-in-law, "but what is this? Explain it to me." "But he told you about it yesterday," says the wife.

"I confess I did not understand. The Gospels, the Sermon on the Mount—and that churches are unnecessary! But then how is one to pray, and all that?"

"Yes," answers the wife. "That is the worst of it. He would destroy everything, and give us nothing in its place." (13)

She goes on to tell how, after his sister died, Nicholas became quite morose, was always talking about death, and then fell ill with typhus. When he recovered he was a changed man. He became indifferent to his family and possessed of one idea. He read the gospels for days on end and did not sleep. He would get up at night to read and to make notes and extracts. He went to see bishops, hermits, and others to consult with them about religion. Curiously enough, and this is what his family could not understand,—the more religious he became the less he could tolerate the churches. He refused to fast or to go to mass or to take communion. "Thoroughly inconsistent!" exclaims his sister-in-law. "If he denies the Church, what does he want the Gospels for?" the brother-in-law asks, and the worried wife answers, "so that we should live according to the Gospels and the Sermon on the Mount, and give everything away." (14) She explains that no matter how much the peasants steal, Nicholas gives them everything. Moreover, he seems to have lost his affection for his own family and declares that it is better that the children

should leave school altogether. When all the family gather together and begin discussing with him his ideas, he says to their utter amazement: "One should give everything away. Not only the forest we do not use and hardly ever see, but even our clothes and our bread." The sister-in-law exclaims: "What! And the children's too?" "Yes," answers Nicholas, "and the children's too. And not only our bread, but ourselves. Therein lies the whole teaching of Christ. One must strive with one's whole strength to give oneself away." (15)

The priest of the neighborhood, who comes to discuss matters with him, endeavors to defend the doctrines, Sacraments, and Saints of the Church. "That's what is terrible!" exclaims Nicholas. "Each *one* of us has to save *his own* soul, and has to do God's work *himself*, but instead of that we busy ourselves saving *other people* and teaching *them*. And what do we teach them? We teach them now, at the end of the nineteenth century, that God created the world in six days, then caused a flood, and put all the animals in an ark, and all the rest of the horrors and nonsense of the Old Testament . . . it is dreadful! A child, fresh and ready to receive all that is good and true, asks us what the world is, and what its laws are; and we, instead of revealing to him the teaching of love and truth that has been given to us, carefully ram into his head all sorts of horrible absurdities and meannesses, ascribing them all to God. Is that not terrible? It is as great a crime as man can commit. And we—you and your Church—do this! Forgive me!" (16)

After the priest, rather humiliated by the discussion, has gone, the sister-in-law says to Nicholas that even his own wife doesn't understand him or believe him. "She *can't* believe you. . . . Just you try and explain it to her! She will never understand, nor shall I, nor anyone else in the world, that one must care for other people and aban-

don one's own children. Go and try to explain that to Mary!" (17) Nicholas does try to explain it, but Mary, although full of the deepest affection for him, attentive to his every wish, willing to sacrifice her own self completely for him, dare not understand. Her opposition is intuitive, and a barrier rises between them which cannot be passed over or penetrated. She fears to be attentive to what he says; yet she tries to be so. When she urges him to help his son to enter the Horse-Guards and to give him money to do so, he answers: "The labour of others does not belong to me. To give him money, I must first take it from others. I have no right to do that, and I cannot do it! As long as I manage the estate I must manage it as my conscience dictates; and I cannot give the fruits of the toil of the overworked peasants to be spent on the debaucheries of Life-Guardsmen. Take over my property, and then I shall not be responsible!" (18) The discussion ends with their mutual misunderstanding even greater than before.

In the next act Mary says: "He wants to give away everything. He wishes me now, at my age, to become a cook and a washerwoman." (19) She then reads a letter just received from Nicholas. He writes: "I cannot continue to live as we have been doing," and he suggests the following plan: "We shall give our land to the peasants, retaining only 135 acres besides the orchards and kitchen-garden and the meadow by the river. We will try to work ourselves, but will not force one another, nor the children. What we keep should still bring us in about £50 a year." (20) This plan only adds to her anxiety and mental distress, and irritations grow on all sides. The entire family is restless and agitated. They all discuss the problem with him and quarrel with him. They distort and misconstrue all that he says and no one seems to understand. His wife confesses that she can't answer him and that at bottom it is terrible for her because it seems to her

he is right. Yet she cannot follow him, dare not follow him for the love of her children.

At last, they import one of the higher clergy to discuss matters with him. It is a remarkable scene—very humiliating, one would imagine, to the leader of the Church. Unable to refute Nicholas, or even to meet fairly his arguments, he abandons the gospels and shifts onto ground that is cold and barren, void of all life and soul. Not to the teaching of Jesus, but to the Church and to the priesthood he demands submission. You must act, the reverend father declares to Nicholas, "as behooves a son of the Church. You have a family and children, and you must keep and educate them in a way suitable to their position." "Why?" demands Nicholas. "Because," the father answers, "God has placed you in that position. If you wish to be charitable, be charitable by giving away part of your property and by visiting the poor." Nicholas then asks, "But how is it that the rich young man was told that the rich cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven?" Whereupon the priest answers, "It is said, 'If thou wouldest be perfect.'" "But," cries Nicholas, "I *do* wish to be perfect. The Gospels say, 'Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven. . . .'" Unable to answer him, the priest rises to leave, declaring that Nicholas is afflicted with spiritual pride. "Since you know everything better than I do," he says, "we had better end our conversation. Only, once again, I must entreat you in God's name to come to your senses. You have gone cruelly astray and are ruining yourself." (21)

What is perhaps more to the point, the priest brings with him a notary. It is intended that Nicholas shall make over his property to his wife, but, when he sees their real purpose, he cries: "And what am I to do? Don't I know why that wretched man—dressed up in his cassock and wearing that cross—was sent for, and why Alexándra Ivânovna brought

the Notary? You want me to hand the estate over to you, but I can't. You know that I have loved you all the twenty years we have lived together. I love you and wish you well, and therefore cannot sign away the estate to you. If I sign it away at all, it can only be to give it back to those from whom it has been taken—the peasants. And I can't let things remain as they are, but must give it to them. I'm glad the Notary has come; and I will do it.

MARY IVÁNOVNA. No, that is dreadful! Why this cruelty? Though you think it a sin, still give it to me. (*Weeps.*)

NICHOLAS IVÁNOVICH. You don't know what you are saying. If I give it to you, I cannot go on living with you; I shall have to go away. I cannot continue to live under these conditions. I shall not be able to look on while the life-blood is squeezed out of the peasants and they are imprisoned, in your name if not in mine. So choose!

MARY IVÁNOVNA. How cruel you are! Is this Christianity? It is harshness! I cannot, after all, live as you want me to. I cannot rob my own children and give everything away to other people; and that is why you want to desert me. Well—do so! I see you have ceased loving me, and I even know why.

NICHOLAS IVÁNOVICH. Very well then—I will sign; but, Mary, you demand the impossible of me. (*Goes to writing-table and signs.*) You wished it, but I shall not be able to go on living like this." (22)

Although Nicholas had threatened to leave his wife after he made over his property to her, he is found, in the next act, at work at a carpenter's bench in a large room in his house at Moscow. He has decided to take up manual labor, and explains: "I . . . wished to act according to Christ's injunction: to leave father, wife and children and to follow Him, and I left home, but how did it end? It ended by my coming back and living with you in luxury in town. Be-

cause I was trying to do more than I had strength for, I have landed myself in this degrading and senseless position: I wish to live simply and to work with my hands, but in these surroundings, with lackeys and porters, it seems a kind of affectation." (23) He says this to his daughter, who has come in to tell him that her fiancê, young Borîs, who is a disciple of Nicholas, has refused to serve in the army and that that will result in his ruin. Nicholas answers that the boy must obey his own conscience which always entails suffering. "There can be no childbirth without suffering," he says, "and it is the same in spiritual life." (24) In the same scene Nicholas is told that another disciple of his, a young priest, has decided to withdraw from the Church. This, too, must entail great suffering to him and his family. Later, the mother of Borîs, Princess Cheremshânov, comes rushing in to beg Nicholas to prevent the ruin of her son. In a state of great excitement, she demands: "What cursed Christianity it is that makes people suffer and perish. I hate this Christianity of yours. It's all right for you, who know you won't be touched; but I have only one son, and you have ruined him!" (25)

Two tragic scenes follow, dealing with the attempt of the Government officials and prison doctors to force Borîs to forego his objections to military training. He is insulted, tormented, and terrorized, but he refuses to recant, even when his mother and others come to urge him to submit to authority.

The last scene of the play is laid in the room of Nicholas. In the drawing-room adjoining, a large and fashionable dance is in progress. Nicholas's daughter has lost her love for Borîs, now in prison, and has consented to be engaged to a fashionable youth, who appears elegantly dressed. The dance, the luxury, the numerous footmen, the extravagance, the engagement of his daughter—all this torments Nicholas. Unable to endure his position any longer,

he decides to leave his wife and family forever. After writing a letter of explanation to his wife, he puts it on the table, but at the moment he starts to go, she enters. She asks what he is about, and he answers, "I cannot endure this terrible, depraved life." (26) The old discussion is gone all over again, and his wife protests that it is impossible for her to let the children grow up illiterate, as he wishes them to do, or for her to do the washing and cooking. Although he disclaims ever wanting that, she declares that it was something very much of that kind and bitterly reproaches him: "No, you are a Christian, you wish to do good, and you say you love men; then why do you torture the woman who has devoted her whole life to you?" (27) She taunts him with the fact that he has no following, that even the young priest has recanted and gone back to the Church; that his daughter, who was devoted to him, has given up his young disciple, whom she now considers a fanatic; and that his only other disciple is a drunken hypocrite and beggar. This only adds to his despair, and he pleads in anguish that to live as he lives gives everyone the right to call him a hypocrite. It proves, he says, "that I talk but do not act! That I preach the Gospel of poverty while I live in luxury, pretending that I have given up everything to my wife!" (28) Unmoved by this, his wife cuts him to the quick, crying: "So you are ashamed of what people say? Really, can't you rise above that?" And he answers: "It's not that I am ashamed (though I am ashamed), but that I am spoiling God's work." (29)

Realizing that she cannot understand him, he declares in great heat: "It's just this want of understanding that is so terrible. Take for instance to-day! I spent this morning at Rzhânov's lodging-house, among the outcasts there; and I saw an infant literally die of hunger; a boy suffering from alcoholism; and a consumptive charwoman rinsing clothes outside in the cold. Then I returned home,

and a footman with a white tie opens the door for me. I see my son—a mere lad—ordering that footman to fetch him some water; and I see the army of servants who work for us. Then I go to visit Boris—a man who is sacrificing his life for truth's sake. I see how he, a pure, strong, resolute man, is deliberately being goaded to lunacy and to destruction, that the Government may be rid of him! I know, and they know, that his heart is weak, and so they provoke him, and drag him to a ward for raving lunatics. It is too dreadful, too dreadful. And when I come home, I hear that the one member of our family who understood—not me but the truth—has thrown over both her betrothed to whom she had promised her love, and the truth, and is going to marry a lackey, a liar. . . ." (30)

At last, his wife, seeing that she has not moved him, tells him that if he goes, she, too, will go. "Or if not with you," she says, "I will throw myself under the train you leave by." (31) This touches him. He takes off his coat; they embrace each other; and in tears she pleads: "Don't let us spoil everything after twenty-eight years of life together. Well, I'll give no more parties; but do not punish me so." (32) The children then come to call her, and, as she goes out with them, Nicholas is left wondering: "a child, a regular child; or a cunning woman? No, a cunning child. Yes, yes. It seems Thou dost not wish me to be Thy servant in this Thy work. Thou wishest me to be humiliated, so that everyone may point his finger at me and say, 'He preaches, but he does not perform.' Well, let them! Thou knowest best what Thou requirest: submission, humility! Ah, if I could but rise to that height!" (33)

Shortly after his wife has gone, he learns authoritatively that the priest has recanted, and at that moment the mother of Boris rushes in and cries in a frenzy: "You have ruined my son, but you don't care; and you go giving balls;

and your daughter—my son's betrothed—is to be married and make a good match, that you approve of; while you pretend to lead a simple life, and go carpentering. How repulsive you are to me, with your new-fangled Pharisaism." (34) He tries to calm her, but she tells him that her son is soon to be removed to the Disciplinary Battalion and that she cannot bear it. The scene ends with Nicholas lamenting: "Vasíly Nikonôrovich has recanted. I have ruined Borís. Lyúba is getting married. Can it be that I have been mistaken? Mistaken in believing in Thee? No! Father help me!" (35)

The drama remains unfinished and was published after Tolstoy's death. The notes he left for a fifth act are unfortunately very incomplete and add little of interest or of dramatic force to that which precedes. Its merit as a drama is not great, but as autobiographical material it has considerable value since it is known that the drama pictures vividly the internal life of the Tolstoy household, although, of course, in all its details it is not scrupulously correct.*

* For dramatic purposes the difficulties that beset Tolstoy in disposing of his property are compressed into small space. The facts are interesting. Tolstoy, after failing to gain his wife's consent to the giving away of his property, demanded that she take it over so that he would have no responsibility for it. "So you want to place it on the shoulders of me, your wife," replied the Countess in tears. (Maude, Aylmer. "The Life of Tolstoy—Later Years," p. 199.) At that time she refused to accept the responsibility but she later regretted her decision, as it led to "a prolonged period of hesitation and uncertainty." She is said at one time to have threatened, in case he should make an attempt to give away his property to the peasants, to appeal to the authorities and to ask them for a guardian to take charge of it. Later she accepted a power of attorney, which gave over to her its entire management. At last, in 1891, Aylmer Maude tells us the estates "were divided up among his wife and children in portions as nearly equal as possible. The share received by the Countess Sophia Andréyevna did not amount to more than what she had brought as a dowry at the time of her marriage; and, like the other shares, it was not much over Rs. 50,000 (about £5000). Yásnaya Polyána went to her and to Iván, the

It is true, however, that Tolstoy again and again threatened to leave his family and that many of his disciples were persecuted and were caused great suffering, while Tolstoy remained untouched. Some, also, recanted, as the young priest did, and others, enthusiastic at first, gradually lost interest. The picture of his wife's inability or unwillingness to understand him seems to be accurate, and no detached dramatist could have dealt more pitilessly or with greater artistic skill with his own torment, lack of decision, and weakness. He lays bare the terrible contradiction of his life and even gives it a text: "I talk but do not act! . . . I preach the Gospel of poverty while I live in luxury." (36)

In this drama we of course see Tolstoy as Tolstoy sees himself. His power of self-analysis was extraordinary, and no one could have been a more severe critic of another than Tolstoy was of himself. He was always sensitive to the opinions of others, and after the property affairs of the family were apparently settled, Tolstoy was still tormented by what he felt to be the hypocrisy of his life. He seemed to feel that everybody was pointing at him a finger of scorn. He could have stood this readily enough, had he not feared that his life would also bring his cherished ideas and ideals into contempt. For those who set themselves an easily attainable standard of Christian conduct, there may be

youngest son, as it had come to Leo Tolstoy himself as youngest son. After Iván's death, his share passed to his brothers, but their mother manages it, and they do not interfere in any way. The other estates in Central Russia went to the elder children, and the house in Moscow, together with a small piece of the Samára estate, to Leo Lvóvitch. When, later on, he wished to sell that house in order to buy one in Petersburg, his mother bought it of him. The rest of the Samára estate, of 6500 desyatinas (about 17,500 acres) went to the younger children: Michael, Andrew and Alexandra. Mary, following her father's teaching, refused to accept any property; but her mother, feeling sure that the girl would change her mind, took charge of her portion, and when Mary married in 1897 she accepted it, and at her death in 1906 left it to her husband, Prince Obolénsky." (Maude, Aylmer. "The Life of Tolstoy—Later Years," p. 427.)

few falls. They may enjoy the satisfaction of living up to their convictions and suffer none of the pangs of conscience that twitch the souls of those whose ideals touch the heavens. The latter can perhaps never realize their ideals, and consequently they rarely enjoy a moment of spiritual peace. They suffer forever, burdened with an acute sense of their sinfulness, and their never-ceasing failure to live up to the task they set themselves. There is a world of difference between the one who would imitate the conduct of the successful merchant, who sits in the front pew of his church, and him who would follow literally the teachings of Jesus Christ. To attain perfectly the one ideal—if it be an ideal—is a comparatively simple task. To attain the other, is perhaps an impossibility. Tolstoy set for himself the highest ideal that has ever been given to the world, and Tolstoy failed. He has had pointed at him fingers of scorn, and very unworthy fingers they were, but who has the right to judge Tolstoy for failure to live perfectly a life that has for two thousand years been an unattainable ideal to millions of earnest souls? His brother-in-law, Behrs, who had an excellent opportunity to observe the complete life of Tolstoy, has justly said: "For myself, I cannot imagine how any one, unless he be actuated by envy or malice, will venture to deny that, in every minutest point, he has, so far as was possible, practised in his life what he preaches in his books. To have deprived his children of their property would have been, probably, in the opinion of most men, an act of cruel and unjustifiable violence." (37).

Tolstoy was, of course, surrounded by men and women who showered their praises upon him, and he had his devotees and disciples who worshiped him. People of great distinction came from all over the world to talk with him and especially to consult him about the practical possibility of the Christian life. Tolstoy invariably met these strangers with humility, never feeling that his own life had

been a successful one. His words upon this point are full of pathos and as tragic as one can find anywhere in literature. "People say to me, 'Well, Lef Nikolaivitch, as far as preaching goes, you preach; but how about your practice?' The question is a perfectly natural one; it is always put to me, and it always shuts my mouth. 'You preach,' it is said, 'but how do you live?' I can only reply that I do not preach—passionately as I desire to do so. I might preach through my actions, but my actions are bad. That which I say is not preaching; it is only my attempt to find out the meaning and significance of life. People often say to me, 'If you think that there is no reasonable life outside the teachings of Christ, and if you love a reasonable life, why do you not fulfil the Christian precepts?' I am guilty and blameworthy and contemptible because I do not fulfil them; but at the same time I say,—not in justification, but in explanation, of my inconsistency,—Compare my previous life with the life I am now living, and you will see that I am trying to fulfil. I have not, it is true, fulfilled one eighty-thousandth part, and I am to blame for it; but it is not because I do not wish to fulfil all, but because I am unable. Teach me how to extricate myself from the meshes of temptation in which I am entangled,—help me,—and I will fulfil all. I wish and hope to do it even without help. Condemn me if you choose,—I do that myself,—but condemn *me*, and not the path which I am following, and which I point out to those who ask me where, in my opinion, the path is. If I know the road home, and if I go along it drunk, and staggering from side to side, does that prove that the road is not the right one? If it is not the right one, show me another. If I stagger and wander, come to my help, and support and guide me in the right path. Do not yourselves confuse and mislead me and then rejoice over it and cry, 'Look at him! He says he is going home, and he is floundering into the swamp!' You are not evil

spirits from the swamp; you are also human beings, and you also are going home. You know that I am alone,—you know that I cannot wish or intend to go into the swamp,—then help me! My heart is breaking with despair because we have all lost the road; and while I struggle with all my strength to find it and keep in it, you, instead of pitying me when I go astray, cry triumphantly, 'See! He is in the swamp with us!'" (38)

Tolstoy's writings leave us in no doubt as to the mental distress and spiritual anguish which he suffered during the last thirty years of his life. He felt again and again that he must leave his family and go into the streets to become a tramp. And this he at last tried to do, as a feeble, old man of eighty-two years. He had been on the point of it thirteen years before, but he had then given up his project—perhaps after just such a scene as occurs in "The Light Shines in Darkness." And like Nicholas, Tolstoy at that time wrote a letter to his wife, fully explaining his action, although it was not seen by her until after his death. It reads as follows: "Dear Sónya,—I have long been tormented by the discord between my life and my beliefs. I could not compel you all to change your life and habits, to which I myself had accustomed you; and I also could not, till now, leave you, for fear of depriving the children while still small of what little influence I may have over them, and of grieving you. On the other hand, I also cannot continue to live as I have lived these sixteen years, struggling, and irritating you, or myself falling under influences and temptations to which I have become accustomed, and by which I am surrounded; and I have now decided to do what I have long wished: to go away; first because for me, in my advancing years, this life becomes more and more burdensome, and I long more and more for solitude; and secondly because the children are now grown up, my influence is no longer needed, and you all have

livelier interests which will render my absence little noticeable.

"The chief thing is, that just as Hindoos nearing sixty retire into the woods, and as old religious men seek to devote their last years to God and not to jokes, puns, gossip, or tennis, so for me, entering my seventieth year, the all-soul-absorbing desire is for tranquillity, for solitude, and if not for entire harmony, at least to avoid crying discord between my life and my beliefs and conscience.

"If I did this openly, there would be entreaties, pleadings, criticism, quarrels, and I might perhaps weaken and not carry out my decision—yet it must be carried out. And so, please forgive me if my act causes you pain; and above all, in your soul, Sónya, leave me free to go, and do not repine or condemn me.

"That I have gone away from you does not mean that I am displeased with you. I know you could not—literally could not—and cannot see and feel as I do, and therefore could not and cannot change your life and sacrifice yourself for something you do not recognize. And therefore I do not blame you, but, on the contrary, recall with love and gratitude the long thirty-five years of our life together—especially the first half of that period, when you, with the maternal devotion of your nature, so firmly and energetically fulfilled what you considered to be your duty. . . . You have given me devotion, and you cannot but be prized for that. But during the last period of our life—the last fifteen years—we have drifted asunder. I cannot think I am to blame, for I know I changed not for myself, nor for other people's sake—but because I could do no other. Neither can I blame you for not following me, but I thank you, and lovingly remember and shall continue to remember you for what you gave me.—Goodbye, dear Sónya.

"Your loving Leo Tolstoy." (39)

For thirteen years and probably more such thoughts as

these had sorely troubled Tolstoy, and on the twenty-eighth day of October, 1910, at five o'clock in the morning, while it was still dark, he stole away from his home. Unable to endure the crowded, smoky, and over-heated third-class carriage, Tolstoy stood on the open platform at the end of the train. It was a wretched day, windy and wet, and he caught a severe cold. He spent the next day with his sister, who was living in a convent. Later, when he continued his journey, he was taken very ill on the train and was forced to stop off at Astápovo, where he obtained a room in the house of the station master. Immediately, telegrams began to fly to doctors, nurses and friends, who rushed to Astápovo. The doctors diagnosed the trouble as inflammation of the left lung, but it is thought that Tolstoy really died of exhaustion. He was utterly worn out by the long and unsuccessful struggle to find a way to apply his principles to his life. He wanted at least to die in poverty, but even this was impossible, and as the doctors and nurses were helping him in his illness, he exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "The peasants . . . the peasants, how *they* die!" (40) Powerless to prevent those about him from serving him, he resented even to the last that he must be attended and cared for, despite his hatred of such things, and that even after running away from temptation, he was not permitted to die as a peasant, as he had been unable to live as a peasant. Almost at the point of death, he sat up in bed and shouted, as doctors, attendants, and friends crowded about him: "This is the end. . . . I give you only this advice . . . besides Leo Tolstoy, there are many other people in the world, and you attend only to this Leo . . . !" (41)

CHAPTER IV

OBSTACLES IN THE PATH OF TRUTH

"The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."
"No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

WHILE Tolstoy lay dying at the small country station of Astâpovo, many of those who had been obstacles in his path to truth hurried to that village to hover over his death bed. Police officers and representatives of the Government came. A priest was sent by order of the Holy Synod to beg Tolstoy to return to the bosom of the Church. The Prime Minister sent a special representative, and the Governor of the Province came in person. Railway officials, newspaper reporters, photographers, and moving picture men came in crowds to Astâpovo. There were five doctors in attendance and of course Tolstoy's family and many friends and admirers from all over Russia. As the town furnished small accommodation, most of the people were living in railway carriages, sidetracked at the station. The local telegraph arrangements had broken down completely under the enormous pressure of work, due to the sending of wires and cables to every part of the world. About Tolstoy's bedside were gathered liberals and reactionaries, peasants and nobles, friends and enemies—all mourning at the approaching loss of one whom they had not understood and whom they had helped, willingly or unwillingly, to defeat. At his death the Tsar, the Dôuma, and the Council of State expressed deep sorrow. All the news-

papers appeared in mourning. The theaters were closed, and the Rector of Petersburg University suspended lectures on the day Tolstoy was buried. The only ones who did not forget or forgive were the priests who had excommunicated this "heretic"; and the Holy Synod, the governing body of the Greek Church, forbade the performance of memorial services in the churches. Outside of a few extreme opponents, all of Russia, and one might say all the world, mourned the loss of the great Tolstoy.

It seems to have been destined that Tolstoy should be defeated in every one of his larger projects, even to the manner of his death. He wished to love others as himself and to dispossess himself of all property, and he failed. He wished first to convert those of his own family to the law of love and from them to have his influence grow and spread little by little throughout the world. This, too, was denied him. One after another of his children, several of whom followed him for a short time, gave up the new life. He wished to be a good example to other men, but people scoffed at him and called him a *poseur* and a hypocrite. He wanted to suffer and to be persecuted, but he was allowed entire freedom, while many others, who circulated his books and writings, were arrested and sent to Siberia. He was, to be sure, excommunicated by the Church and his writings were severely censored; but, feared and hated as he was by the civil, military and ecclesiastical authorities, no one laid a hand upon him. When plans were being made to celebrate Tolstoy's eightieth birthday, one of his admirers was imprisoned for circulating Tolstoy's writings; whereupon it was suggested that the jubilee could be best celebrated by sending Tolstoy himself to prison, as the author of works for which others were being persecuted. This delighted Tolstoy, and he wrote, "Nothing would really so fully satisfy me, or give me such pleasure, as to be put in prison." (1) Tolstoy truly desired martyrdom;

yet no matter what he did, the authorities refused to arrest him. The policy of nonresistance to evil which Tolstoy so earnestly advocated, was effectually used against him. Even the Tsar said, "Let the old man alone," and in this manner he was rendered helpless.

The greatest obstacle that confronted Tolstoy lies rooted deep in the soul of man. It is the fear of poverty and the dread of want which ages of struggle with man and beast and with all the adverse elements of nature has bred in us. Surely history teaches us too well the nature and character of man for us to believe readily that there are many fathers and mothers who would ever consent to become Christians on the conditions set forth by Tolstoy. His plan of life may be sensible, socially unobjectionable and even admirable if undertaken by single men and women, but who, to-day, would fail to condemn unreservedly any father who would take his babies from a comfortable home to live, hungry and shelterless, in the forests and fields? From the dawn of the world the chief duty of a parent has been to keep his family secure from want. And the first thing that any of us does now, when he finds a family in distress, is to try to persuade the father, if there be one, to do his duty to his family and to work to supply their material wants. Thrift and foresight are among the chief teachings of all missionaries to the poor and the present-day world has little sympathy for any parent—whether a Harold Skimpole, a Mrs. Jellyby, a Jean Jacques Rousseau, or a Leo Tolstoy,—who for any cause whatsoever feels that he should give no thought for the morrow and that his children may live like the fowls of the air. Abraham offered his son as a sacrifice upon the altar, but was not that easier than to see one's children slowly dying of starvation and neglect? And if it is impossible to induce fathers to abandon their families, how much more impossible would it be to induce mothers?

When Tolstoy sought to live the truly Christian life, the immediate obstacle he found in his path was his own wife. She refused point-blank to follow him, although on all other questions she was tolerant, loving and self-sacrificing. As we have seen, the one serious quarrel of their lives arose over the practice of Christianity. She was the typical mother, exactly like millions of others who, to the very last, would defend and protect their children. She adored her husband, but notwithstanding his threats and his tears she would not sacrifice the material interests of her children. The next world had to take care of itself. She was burdened with dependents in this world, and like nearly every other mother-animal in creation, she insisted, in so far as she was able, upon feeding and protecting her young. She was as impervious as a tigress, concealing the lair of her young, to the teaching that a Christian must be willing to sacrifice everything and everybody in pursuit of truth. One cannot overemphasize the seriousness of such opposition, since it is beyond doubt that if fathers or mothers are unwilling to live the truly Christian life, and if they stand as obstacles in its path, Christianity will never make progress in the world.

Few fathers or mothers could be induced even to listen to Tolstoy without irritation, and therefore most of his admirers, followers, and hero worshipers were young men and women, some of whom were of a type that must have been a disappointment to him. Certainly a number of them, although widely proclaiming themselves to be Tolstoyans, proved serious obstacles to the cause that Tolstoy had at heart. We have from a governess, Anna Seuron, an interesting description of some of those who flocked to the Tolstoy estate to follow the great teacher. What she says must be taken with some discretion, as she had been dismissed by the Countess, although she does not appear to have been resentful or malignant. "Those oppressed by

riches and *ennui*," she writes, "came in carriages, on horseback and on foot, seeking peace. Sons of good families, who had already skimmed the cream of life; women who had buried the bloom of their illusions in unwomanliness; poor, half-developed students who wished to imitate the Count: their intentions were good towards themselves, but what to one brings blessing, often to another brings a curse! . . . Sons of some of the highest aristocracy discarded gold and lands and went into the desert to eat locusts. Ladies from Cronstadt, *dames de classe* (lady-superintendents or *chaperons* in a girls' school), appeared at Yásnaya and manured the fields in goloshes and white dressing-jackets." (2)

Although the picture may be somewhat overdrawn, it must have been obvious even to Tolstoy that nothing great could come out of such material. And Aylmer Maude, who knew most of Tolstoy's disciples, tells us that "many who tried to discard the stiff stays or supporting irons of convention and external law, and felt encouraged to trust to their own judgment without regard for the opinions and customs of their fellows, went completely to pieces." (3) Both inside and outside their colonies, the Tolstoyans proved rather a source of amusement to others than an inspiration and a light, and those who scoffed at Tolstoy's followers greatly enjoyed relating stories of their inconsistencies. "I remember," writes Maude, "how much amusement was caused by the conduct of one of his closest followers, a man of means, and active in business connected with the spread of Tolstoy's views, who ceased to use money, but allowed his wife to sign his cheques and his secretary to accompany him to the station to buy him railway tickets." (4) This sort of self-deception cannot last long, and Anna Seuron rightly says, "Most of them came to grief with their madness and good intentions . . . and many of Tolstoy's followers are now boiling in brim-

stone, or are like mice in a trap." (5) There is tragedy, as well as comedy, in all such stories. Those who became Tolstoyans did not become, along with their new faith, supermen, able to live without regard to the conditions that surrounded them; and when principles will not work out in practice and the obstructions confronting men are too great, even the most faithful give way. And this, so far as we know, is what happened to every Tolstoyan.

However, all the Tolstoyans were not like those described by Anna Seuron. Some of them were able, deeply sincere men and women, and one was an extraordinary person, who tested Tolstoyanism more thoroughly even than Tolstoy himself. This was Prince D. A. Hilkôf, a man of high character and of exceptional ability, who had been the youngest Colonel of his period in the Russian army. Very successful in war, he was also extremely conscientious and carried on a lively fight with the dishonest contractors, who have always been the bane of the Russian army. Able both as an officer and as an administrator and greatly admired by his men, he was overcome with remorse, after cutting down a Turk with his own hand in a cavalry charge. This led him, as soon as the war was over in 1878, to resign his commission and leave the army. Disregarding his high connections and rank, the young Prince gave his lands to the peasants and retained only about twenty-five acres for himself. He then went to work as a peasant, without pay, hoping that by diligence and skill he might make himself sufficiently expert to be worthy of being employed at five roubles a month as a peasant laborer. When he attained that degree of proficiency he intended to marry and settle down on his twenty-five acres. He was deeply sincere and soon gained a remarkable influence over the peasants in his neighborhood. He quarreled, however, with the priests and with the Russian Church and he was exiled to the Caucasus where he lived among the Doukhobors. This

religious sect, numbering about 20,000 people, refused military service in 1895, and the authorities suspected Hilkôf of leading them astray. He was then banished to the Baltic Provinces, but was later allowed to emigrate to England where he joined the Tolstoy colony. With great earnestness, sincerity and devotion, Prince Hilkôf thoroughly tested the Tolstoyan theories. Because of his youth and lack of family, he was able to go further than Tolstoy in the simplification of his life and in his complete renunciation; but after many years of trial, he felt the inadequacy of Tolstoyism to solve the more serious social problems. As a consequence, he abandoned many of his individualist opinions and became a socialist. Aylmer Maude is of the opinion that the life of Hilkôf shows how impossible it is for isolated individuals—no matter how sincere and devoted they may be in their efforts to help the people—to make headway against an antagonistic government, especially such a government as then existed in Russia. This is no doubt true, but Hilkôf also failed in England where the government was not unfriendly. However, the Russian government undoubtedly stood as an immense obstacle in the path of both Hilkôf and Tolstoy.

Again and again, Tolstoy cried out: "I cannot live so. I cannot continue to live so." Yet he did continue to live so. Day after day, month after month, year after year, he said this to his wife, to his family, to his friends, to society, and to the Government without its having the slightest effect upon them. That Tolstoy was pitifully ineffectual is shown in what is perhaps his most tragic utterance,—published in 1908, two years before his death. During that year the Government was suppressing in blood the last remains of the revolution in Russia, and the number of hangings was so great that Tolstoy wrote, under the title "I Cannot Be Silent," a tremendous protest. "Everything now being done in Russia," he writes, "is done in the name of the gen-

eral welfare, in the name of the protection and tranquillity of the inhabitants of Russia. And if this be so, then it is also all done for me, who live in Russia. For me, therefore, exists the destitution of the people, deprived of the first, most natural right of man—the right to use the land on which he is born; for me the half-million men torn away from wholesome peasant life and dressed in uniforms and taught to kill; for me that false so-called priesthood, whose chief duty it is to pervert and conceal true Christianity; for me all these transportations of men from place to place; for me these hundreds of thousands of unfortunates dying of typhus and scurvy in the fortresses and prisons which do not suffice for such a multitude; for me the mothers, wives and fathers of the exiles, the prisoners, and those who are hanged, are suffering; for me these dozens and hundreds of men have been shot; for me the horrible work goes on of these hangmen, at first enlisted with difficulty, but who now no longer so loathe their work; for me exist these gallows, with well-soaped cords from which hang women, children and peasants; for me exists this terrible embitterment of man against his fellow-man.

"Strange as is the statement that all this is done for me, and that I am a participator in these terrible deeds, I cannot but feel that there is an indubitable interdependence between my spacious room, my dinner, my clothing, my leisure, and these terrible crimes committed to get rid of those who would like to take from me what I use. And though I know that these homeless, embittered, depraved people—who but for the Government's threats would deprive me of all I am using—are products of that same Government's actions, still I cannot help feeling that, at present, my peace really is dependent on all the horrors that are now being perpetrated by the Government.

"And being conscious of this, I can no longer endure it, but must free myself from this intolerable position!

"It is impossible to live so! I, at any rate, cannot and will not live so.

"That is why I write this, and will circulate it by all means in my power, both in Russia and abroad, that one of two things may happen: either that these inhuman deeds may be stopped, or that my connection with them may be snapped, and I put in prison, where I may be clearly conscious that these horrors are not committed on my behalf; or, still better (so good that I dare not even dream of such happiness) they may put on me, as on those twenty or twelve peasants (whose fate I have mentioned) a shroud and a cap, and may push me also off a bench, so that by my own weight I may tighten the well-soaped noose round my old throat." (6)

This is as courageous and noble as it is supremely tragic; but the outraged Tolstoy might with equal effect have denounced the actions of the sun, the moon, or the stars. Despite the real greatness of Tolstoy, he was, after all, but an individual with no organization whatever to support him. And he could do nothing alone, not even so much as spread among others, except in secret, his magnificent protest and challenge. As every other isolated rebel must do in modern society, Tolstoy could only wring his hands in helpless agony. Confronting every reformer, is an organized economic, political, and social system which has been built up by centuries of human evolution, and it is clear that the only effective way to alter such a system is through some form of organized action. But that Tolstoy never could see; and, to the astonishment of everyone, he refused to lend a hand to the forces of democracy, which, at the moment Tolstoy wrote his protest, were engaged in a life and death struggle with Russian tyranny. In fact, he condemned them. He aroused the indignation and resentment of even his dearest friends, by declaring in a cablegram sent to the *North American Review*, that the entire revolu-

tionary movement in Russia would only delay "true social amelioration," which, as he wired, "can be attained only by religious moral perfecting of all individuals. Political agitation, putting before individuals pernicious illusion of social improvement by change of forms, habitually stops the real progress, as can be observed in all Constitutional countries—France, England, America." (7) This in a nutshell is Tolstoy's social philosophy and it was obvious to everyone that Tolstoy and the reactionaries of all countries—the Tsar no less than the Kaiser—were in complete agreement. Prince Hilkôf was among those who disagreed with Tolstoy and he wrote him, "Why not admit that it is possible for men sincerely to believe that it is God's will that they should devote themselves to replacing the present Government of Russia by a better one?" (8) Unhappily, Tolstoy could not be moved and he refused to join the liberals, the conservatives, or the revolutionists. He asked only to be left in peace. Although Tolstoy in his protest recognized the fact that he was bound up with all others, neither this nor the knowledge of his individual helplessness induced him to work with others in order to change any part of the infamous governmental system of Russia. By this self-imposed isolation he placed obstacles in his own path that were fatal to the spread of his faith and doctrines.

This antagonism to organized effort was especially unfortunate, as conditions in Russia were unusually favorable to the spread of many of Tolstoy's doctrines. His interpretation of the Christian teaching is very similar to that which prevailed in nearly every peasant community in western Europe in the Middle Ages. Like doctrines gave rise to a peasant movement in Armenia in the ninth century, and in the fourteenth; a revolt of the peasants in England resulted from the teaching of the Lollards. The Anabaptists, the Hussites, and many other sects of Christian communists arose in the following centuries. There

is a peculiar soil in which these doctrines take root. Wherever the chief economic problem is the unjust distribution of land, Christian communism seems to appeal to the masses. In the time of Jesus almost everybody worked in small shops or on the land and then sold or bartered their own products in the towns. There were no vast industrial centers, no great factories, no steam power or electricity. Everyone knew his neighbor by name. There was no highly developed division of labor, nor were there great extremes of wealth and poverty. Such economic conditions are ideal—or at least as nearly ideal as they can ever be—for the spread of Christian communism. And so they are still in many parts of Russia.

Russia has always been several centuries behind western civilization. The practices of barbarism continued in Russia about three centuries later than in western Europe. Nearly all the modern arts and industries developed late. Arabic numerals were introduced in Europe in the twelfth century, but it was not until the seventeenth century that they appeared in Russia. Christianity arrived there later and has always existed in a form peculiar to that country. It is still common for men to believe in magic and in the power of evil spirits.[1] The religious life of the people is largely ceremonial and partakes of idolatry. The priests are said to be very corrupt, and their lives often vicious. To-day in Russia troops of pilgrims, not quite so picturesque, but not altogether unlike those described in the "Canterbury Tales," are to be seen going on foot to Odessa and thence to Palestine. There are many begging friars similar

[1] As the writer has not been in Russia for fifteen years, and as some of the following statements are summaries of his studies at that time, they should perhaps be placed here in the past tense, since the people of Russia have made considerable progress in recent years. Moreover, many conditions have been already altered by the recent revolutionary governments, although no stable political or economic system has yet emerged from the chaos.

to those of the Middle Ages in Europe. The Church, intrusted with secular power, is joined with the State. It prohibits any change of faith and even possesses the power to deprive a heretic of his property. Moreover, anyone proved to be a heretic or a nonconformist may be sent to a penal colony.

The peasants, only a short time free from serfdom, are wretchedly poor. Tolstoy once remarked that if one used in Russia the standard that Booth used in England as a test for poverty, practically the entire laboring mass of Russia would have to be classed as living constantly under the poverty line. The people in that country are about three-fourths illiterate, and the vast majority of the laboring people are peasants. Floggings are of daily occurrence, and the fatalism common to all backward peoples is widespread in Russia. The masses suffer with stolid indifference plagues and famines, crop failures and floods, high taxes, military tyranny, imprisonment. They seem hardly to differentiate between disasters which overcome them from natural causes and disasters which overcome them from political and social causes. Although they are ignorant and not very persevering and industrious, they are democratic and communistic by nature, as most of the earlier institutions in Russia prove. Among them exists an immense opportunity for the spread of views such as Tolstoy held, but instead of espousing their cause or seeking in any manner to organize the peasants for coöperative action, he invariably taught them submission, nonresistance to evil, loyalty to their masters, and the most extreme form of Christian humility and service.

In many of his stories for the people Tolstoy tries to teach this moral, that no matter how cruel and oppressive one's master may be, one should always labor to serve him faithfully and with humility do everything one is ordered to do. In "The Devil's Persistent" and "A Candle"—

two charming little tales—this moral is taught, and much the same lesson is given in "Ilyas." In the last he dwells upon the cares of wealth and shows how riches inevitably destroy the possibility of a truly religious life. He is eloquent upon the inner peace and joy that come from a life of poverty and tries to impress upon his reader that labor and humble service are capable of yielding more contentment and true happiness than wealth, idleness and mastery over other men. Again, in "The Two Old Men," Tolstoy teaches that God is found in service and that we can only come near to God if we love and serve those about us. He assures the peasants, "However bad the employer may be, he will always feed his workman, as he will always feed the horse which works for him." (9)

"Now, always, and everywhere," he repeats, "the man who labors receives the means of bodily subsistence just as every horse receives fodder." (10) This is, of course, the common point of view of the landed aristocrats and was once used by them as an argument in defense of slavery. And while it may seem a benighted view, especially in one like Tolstoy, who is otherwise so enlightened, he appears to have thought that, so far as the material problems of life are concerned, the peasant is in a fortunate position. He even urges the peasant to believe that he will be infinitely happier if he will but content himself to labor "in obedience to Christ's teaching with the object of accomplishing all the work of which he is capable and wishing for it the least possible return." (11)

Needless to say, the poor did not hear such doctrines gladly and they were not at all disposed to follow the teaching of Tolstoy. It need not concern us whether or not such doctrines are truly Christian (and many will believe that they are); but certain it is that such teaching was no more acceptable to the peasants than some of *Tolstoy's other* views were to his wife and to the Gover

ment. And as a result of such views, barriers arose between Tolstoy and the peasants. The more enlightened of their leaders looked upon him as a reactionary, standing in the way of the people's progress.

No less inacceptable were Tolstoy's advice and suggestions to the rich and poor in the great cities. The fact that modern economic development is dividing the world into two distinct classes—the rich and the poor—was recognized by Tolstoy, and some of his most memorable pages picture vividly the luxury and poverty that exist side by side in the Russian cities. As he became better acquainted with the people in the towns and industrial centers, he found the rich growing more arrogant and the poor more and more bitter. Among the latter immense organizations were being formed to battle for their rights; and he saw and deplored the beginning of a class struggle which has ended as we now know in Bolshevism. Class hatred and strife appeared to Tolstoy as frightfully immoral and unchristian, and he pled fervently with the rich to change their manner of living. He besought them to seek a new life and solemnly warned them that if they did not become true Christians, there was for them serious danger ahead. "The workmen's revolution," he writes in words truly prophetic, "with the terrors of destruction and murder, not only threatens us, but we have already been living upon its verge during the last thirty years, and it is only by various cunning devices that we have been postponing the crisis. . . . The hatred and contempt of the oppressed people are increasing, and the physical and moral strength of the richer classes are decreasing: the deceit which supports all this is wearing out, and the rich classes have nothing wherewith to comfort themselves." (12)

But neither warnings nor pleadings impressed [illegible] while Tolstoy knew very little about [illegible] and found mechanics and skilled [illegible]

hard to approach, he pled with them to refrain from any resort to violence. He seems to have recognized clearly enough that the condition of the industrial worker is different from that of the peasant, and in one of his last writings, entitled, "To the Working People," he says, "Every one who has a heart and eyes sees that you, working men, are obliged to pass your lives in want and in hard labor, which is useless to you, while other men, who do not work, enjoy the fruits of your labor,—that you are the slaves of these men, and that this ought not to exist." (13) This very radical statement admits the justice of the grievance held by millions of workingmen in all the industrial centers of Russia and western Europe; but Tolstoy, while sympathizing with the industrial workers, believed that they ought not to organize in trade unions and he opposed strenuously nearly every form of action advocated by working-class organizations. He did not believe in the political action advocated by the socialist party. He thought it futile to change the personnel of the Government, and it appeared to him that the making of new laws is an absurdity which could effect no change in conditions. The single tax, he thought, might help, but he did not urge an organized movement to achieve that reform. And again he says the sole hope of mankind lies in the Christian life. However, there was one form of concerted action that Tolstoy believed advisable and he asked the workers to refrain religiously, firstly, from working for capitalists, if they could possibly get on without it; secondly, from offering their work at a lower rate than that current; thirdly, from improving their position by passing over to the side of the capitalists and serving their interests; and fourthly and chiefly, from participating in governmental coercion, be it police, customhouse, or military service. Only by such "a religious attitude toward the form of their activity" can the workmen liberate themselves from oppression. The

plan of action here suggested Tolstoy liked to think of as a bloodless revolution that would be carried into effect through passive resistance. The rich and powerful are not to be attacked and injured. There is to be no violent insurrection. The workers are simply to refrain from doing anything that will add to the wealth or power of those who now dominate their lives. Tolstoy's program of action would constitute a kind of revolutionary boycott. It would be in effect a general strike and it is probable that no government in the world could defeat the masses if they were once generally enlisted in such a movement. All the people cannot be shot down or imprisoned, and if all the people were willing to do as Thoreau did—go to jail rather than pay taxes—government itself would disappear. Fortunately or unfortunately, Tolstoy's suggestions created no enthusiasm among the people. The rich, as well as the peasants and factory hands, were deaf to his counsel and pleadings. They, too, were obstacles, unmovable, and all of them seemed to be more than eager for Russia to hasten along the path already traversed by western civilization.

Tolstoy seems not to have realized that to achieve a bloodless revolution an almost perfect organization would be necessary. As we have seen, he would not work with any organized group in Russia. He would not ally himself with the liberals, the socialists, the communists, the anarchists, the trade unionists, or the revolutionists. He would not join a colony of his friends or go to live with the Doukhobors, who stood for many of his teachings. He had no organized method for promoting better ways of living, or for combating social wrong. Although the conditions in Russia were particularly well suited to the spread of coöperative colonies, based upon religious teaching, Tolstoy did not promote any such projects. At Kharkof, Poltava, Schaveevsky, and Tver in Russia, and at Purleigh in England, his admirers sought through colonies to work

out the principles which Tolstoy was advocating. No doubt Tolstoy wished these colonies success, but he never joined a colony and never seemed entirely convinced that they would prove successful.

Thus in practice Tolstoy remained isolated, and if one were to name his philosophy, it would have to be called Christian anarchism. He was in reality a free lance in action and a pure individualist in theory. He could see no reason why the well-being of wife and children, the desire for riches, or the fear of poverty should in any way swerve a man from the strict and narrow path of duty. He seems not to have believed that the moral code of humanity is influenced to any considerable degree by the history of humanity, the growth of social institutions, or the prevailing state of economic development. Yet, if this was his belief, he was not altogether consistent, because he seems to have felt somehow that social evolution was standing in his way. He did not like the division of labor. He hated all forms of commerce and trade. The State was an abomination in his eyes. He wanted it abolished and with it, indeed, all of modern society based upon machine industry. With Rousseau, he would go back to the primitive state. Revolutionary consequences would result from the principles he advocated. The present remarkable industrial processes would be sacrificed. Associated production would be rendered impossible. Profit, rent, and interest would be no more. There would be no diversified division of labor. Cities and industrial communities would dwindle and disappear. Society as a whole would return to the meager production, indeed to the actual poverty of an agricultural and handicraft age. A community of Indians in America before the invasion of the whites had as much social organization as Tolstoy seems to have felt necessary for mankind. "The Anarchists are right in everything; . . ." he writes, except "only in thinking that

Anarchy can be instituted by a revolution." (14) The entire world would be broken into atoms—each an individualist, standing alone.

Tolstoy was led to this amazing program by his logic. He was skeptical of all groups and had no concern whatever for the material comforts, to achieve which society has organized itself. Except for one contradiction—his belief in the single tax—he had no faith in the efficacy of any economic, social, or political reform. Toward the end of his life he seemed concerned solely with the inner man. "There can be only one permanent revolution,—" he writes, "a moral one; the regeneration of the inner man." (15) No anarchist could preach an individualism more uncompromising. Tolstoy, after all his search for truth, came to the conclusion that individual perfection is the thing to strive for. One must save one's own soul. Struggling apparently to annihilate self, Tolstoy pursued the circle of his philosophy until he came back to the point of deifying self. In placing such emphasis upon individual regeneration, Tolstoy departed from the teaching of the gospels. Individualism is certainly not a dominant note in the teachings of Jesus. As we shall see, he was seeking the kingdom of God on earth, not merely the salvation of isolated souls each struggling alone for individual perfection. Other causes contributed to Tolstoy's failure, but the most important of all the causes was this unmitigated individualism, which not only rendered impossible coöperation with other men, but even made the evolution of human society an obstacle which had to be overcome.

It was but natural that one with such views should have an instinctive dread of so-called western progress. Far from individualizing life, western progress is in nearly every manner socializing life; and in general the social and economic tendencies in the West seemed to Tolstoy to be fighting against his most cherished ideals. Individuals

were there being swallowed up and destroyed in an evil social organization. It was deplorable, Tolstoy thought, to see Russia following in this path. He was living in a transitional age, and watching Russia change from a peasant and handicraft society into an industrial régime based upon steam power and electricity. About him multitudes of peasants were leaving the land to crowd into the factories. He tried unsuccessfully to persuade them to stay on the land and warned them that nothing but evil could come to them and to others by the growth and spread of modern capitalism. He denounced science and all the products of the mechanical era, including "steam-engines, and telegraphs, photographs, telephones, sewing-machines, phonographs, electricity, telescopes, spectroscopes, microscopes, chloroform, Lister bandages, carbolic acid. . . .

"All this progress is very striking indeed;" he writes, "but owing to some unlucky chance, . . . this progress has not as yet ameliorated, but it has rather deteriorated, the condition of the working-man. . . ." It is "these very . . . machines which have deprived him of his wages, and brought him to a state of entire slavery to the manufacturer." (16) He denounced the motives of those who engineer this progress. "We all know very well the motives for building railways, and for producing kerosene and matches. An engineer builds a railway for the government, to facilitate wars, or for the capitalists for financial purposes. . . . His most skilful inventions are either directly harmful to the people, as guns, torpedoes, solitary prisons, and so on; or they are not only useless, but quite inaccessible to them, as electric light, telephones, and the innumerable improvements of comfort; or, lastly, they deprave the people, and rob them of their last kopek, that is, their last labour, for spirits, wine, beer, opium, tobacco, calicoes, and all sorts of trifles." (17)

In science, he could see nothing useful to mankind. It

has catalogued insects, he writes, but it has domesticated no animal since biblical times. Botanists have discovered cells and in the cells something else, but they have no time to do anything useful. For instance, since the time of the Egyptians, wheat and lentils have been cultivated, but during all these years not a single plant has been added for the nourishment of the people except potatoes, and these have not been discovered by science. He advised the scientist, the surgeon, the teacher, and the artist to go and live as the poor live and try to minister to their actual wants, instead of counting up insects, chemically analyzing the contents of the Milky Way, painting water nymphs and historical pictures, writing novels, and composing symphonies.

If one were to attempt to dwell upon the details of the modern world condemned by Tolstoy, one would need a large chapter, even to catalogue them. He could see little good in the clergy, while he utterly condemned the military, the rulers of the earth, the judges, the capitalists, the landlords, the merchants, the jailers, the functionaries. He assailed modern art and classed artists with scientists and ministers as the lackeys of a degenerate and parasitic class of wealthy men. Political economists he considered as retainers of the same class and their product as the throwing of dust in the eyes of those who seek for a way out of our unhappy social conditions. Nor did his condemnations end with the supporters of the present régime. He turned upon those who are produced by its wrongs and condemned socialists, revolutionists, trade unionists, feminists, coöperators, and all reformers and menders of the present order, including charity organizationists and almoners. The most hopeless one of all in the present-day world is "the good man," who lives in comfort, helps the needy, attends service, and is utterly impervious to any real religion.

As Tolstoy condemned the privileged classes, so he also condemned most of their habits. He has written many memorable pages on the evil habits which result from the useless, unproductive, and parasitic lives of the wealthy. He condemned gluttony, drunkenness, smoking, idleness, dancing, gymnastics, and even excessive bathing and cleanliness. There are two kinds of lusts, he writes, "there are complex lusts, like that of the adornment of the body, sports, amusements, idle talk, inquisitiveness, and many others; and there are also fundamental lusts—gluttony, idleness, sexual love." (18)

Both the complex and the fundamental lusts are spread and fostered in the great cities and industrial centers which are so fast developing under modern capitalism. Therefore Tolstoy deplored all the modern tendencies toward immense congregations of people in limited areas, on the ground that they were making more and more impossible the truly Christian life. In cities the rich find little restraint to their lusts, while the lusts of the poor are greater there than in the country, and they satisfy them up to the limit of their means. In the country, Tolstoy could still see the possibility of men living a Christian life; in the cities he saw no such possibility. Cities had therefore to be uprooted and destroyed. The people had to get back to the soil.

Tolstoy was, of course, seeking the impossible; but in wishing to return to the conditions of an agricultural, handicraft society he had much in common with idealists in every country who lived at the period when society was changing from one age to the other. During the Industrial Revolution in England the idealists lamented the changes taking place under their eyes. The evils developing in the tenements that surrounded the factories, the shocking conditions of the child laborers in mills, mines, and factories, the demoralizing effect upon the upper classes of the cruel

pursuit of wealth—all was deplored. Even as late as the time of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Morris, lamentations arose over the injurious development which had changed the world from a wholesome rural and village life to a spotted fever of great cities and industrial hells. In France and Germany there were the same lamentations, as they, too, later developed what is now generally spoken of as modern capitalism. The idealists of all countries have deplored the change that "made wealth accumulate and men decay," but Tolstoy saw something more than the ruin of the body of the townspeople. He despaired of Christianity. It is hardly too much to say that. He could see no way by which true Christianity could grow in the towns, and he knew of no one who could so order his life as to live according to the teachings of Jesus in a modern city.

The obstacles which confronted Tolstoy were overwhelming. The Church and the Government made every effort to suppress his writings, to discredit his teaching, and to imprison or hang every man who ventured to spread his doctrines. His own wife and family saw only destruction in following him, and nearly every father and mother in Russia felt that those who adopted his teachings must sacrifice their children. No less opposed to him were the rich, the employers of labor, and the large landowners. They had no intention of becoming Christians, if it meant giving up wealth, influence, and power. The peasants, too, wanted not less but more of this world's goods. They were in a wretched state, and not at all disposed to serve their masters in all humility. On the contrary, they were becoming more and more discontented. Multitudes of them were starving, and the teachings of Tolstoy seemed to them monstrously unfair. This was also the point of view of the poor in the cities,—especially of the trade unionists and socialists. They were bent upon making a fight—even upon revolution, bloody or otherwise—if they felt it would

gain better conditions of life for themselves and their families. One might say all mankind—rich and poor, men, women, and children, stood like a rock against any spread of Tolstoy's theories. He was really alone, and although he seemed universally admired and much that he said wielded great influence, his practical program for the spread of Christianity was, curiously enough, inacceptable to every class and condition of society, not only in Russia but everywhere.

The fact is, Tolstoy required of men impossible sacrifices and his program led to complete individual and social annihilation. So long as his teachings simply meant that single men should become vegetarians, teetotalers, and ascetics, he found a few ready to become his disciples; but when he asked parents to give up all property and every material security, without even offering them the refuge of a coöperative or communistic society, they refused to follow him. Evidently, it is impossible to find men willing to sacrifice so much; and one wonders if it is necessary. It may be necessary for most of us to have fewer luxuries in order to achieve a higher spiritual life. It may be better for all of us to cease befogging our minds with alcohol and tobacco; and to cease eating meat and other heating foods which may add to our lusts. But can no way be found by which every man may be assured of what, let us remember, Tolstoy always had, a wife and children, a good bed, a safe and warm sheltering roof, proper clothes, some leisure and peace for the improvement of the mind, a few books and pictures, a little music, and, best of all, no fear for his old age and no dread of want for himself or his loved ones? This is the vital matter. Is there no way by which men may be assured of these things and yet love their fellowmen in truth and in deed? Such a way was found in the communism of the early Christians. Some of these things are assured to monks by the institution of the monasteries.

Peasants and others found a way in their coöperative communities. Each of these groups worked out a material basis of life, suited to their spiritual needs. To work out some such material basis for Christianity is the chief problem of humanity, and its solution will mean the salvation of mankind. The obstacles that defeated Tolstoy and now block the path to truth can be overcome; and, as we shall see in the next chapter, the lives of Jesus and his first disciples show the way.

CHAPTER V

THE WAY TO TRUTH

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

HAVING dealt at some length with Tolstoy's conception of Christianity and with his strenuous efforts to live the truly Christian life, we then dwelt upon the obstacles which confronted and defeated him. It is now obviously necessary to examine carefully the teaching of Jesus and to discover, if possible, wherein his teaching differs from that of Tolstoy. In certain points Tolstoy's position is unassailable, as we think most students of the Bible will agree. His condemnation of riches; his criticisms of militarism, of Russian oppression, of the Russian church and its priesthood; his love for the poor, and his wish to do "bread-labor," are all in harmony with the best tradition of the early Christian church, and have adequate support in the gospel. Let us first see if this is not true, and we can then compare Tolstoy's way to truth with the way so clearly pointed out to us by Jesus and by the acts of his disciples.

Jesus had, as we know, few friends among the rich or the learned of his time. His followers came from among the artisans, the peasants, and the fishing folk. This and similar facts have led some scholars to maintain, rather plausibly but without any great degree of authority, that Jesus and most of his immediate family were primarily social revolutionists. Other students have tried, without success, to prove that Jesus belonged to the group of communists called Essenes. One writer tells us that trade

unions were widespread at the time of Jesus, and that he, his brothers, and his friends were leaders of a vigorous working-class movement. Certainly, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and, we must not forget, also of James and Jude, entertained some strongly revolutionary views. And that is true likewise of her cousin, Elizabeth, who was the mother of John the Baptist. At least they were all intensely democratic; vigorous advocates of the rights of the poor and bitter opponents of the rich and powerful. Richard Heath says of James: "The ardent love for justice he . . . displays was commemorated by his traditional name of Obliam—the Rampart of the People—and again proved by his martyrdom at the hands of the aristocratic party at Jerusalem. Jude's Epistle reveals the same fiery indignation against the worldly spirit. With what unsparing severity it denounces the tuft-hunting, time-serving race, who have 'men's persons in admiration because of advantage'! Simon,[1] a third brother of Jesus, and afterwards an Apostle, belonged at one period of his life to the actively revolutionary party, and it was ever remembered as something admirable rather than the reverse, for he is always called by one or other of the party names." (2)

That the spirit of these sons was the family spirit is indicated by the fact that Mary, when the babe Jesus leapt in her womb, sang with joy the *Magnificat*. In this beautiful hymn she conceives the Lord as the defender of the poor, who "hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away." (St. Luke i, 52–3.) If this is the type of song which Jesus heard in his childhood, there is little wonder that Christianity is revolutionary in spirit. King Robert of Sicily clearly

[1] Simon was probably not a brother of Jesus but his cousin and the son of Joseph's brother, Clopas. (Edersheim, Rev. Alfred. "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Vol. I, p. 522.) (1)

enough recognized this when he rejoiced that the *Magnificat* was sung only in Latin, as the masses could not understand what they were singing. Whatever may have been the early teaching of Jesus, the fact, nevertheless, is that while he condemned the rich, he invariably treated the working people, the poor, the widows, and the orphans with the utmost tenderness and love. Throughout the Scriptures the poor are generally spoken of as gentle, humble, pious, ready to wait and to serve; they are the meek who are mistreated and robbed. "Blessed be ye poor; for your's is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." (St. Luke vi, 20–1.) This point of view might almost be called the keynote of the gospel. In the Old Testament, also, the poor are spoken of as enjoying God's special protection. When Job tried to justify his life he placed especial stress upon the fact that he never oppressed the poor. Rarely, if anywhere, is the condition of the poor laid to any other cause than that of the inhumanity of man. "Hearken, my beloved brethren," says James, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (St. James ii, 5.) [1]

This devotion to the claims of the poor led James to suggest something approaching class hatred, and he asks the

[1] It is well to point out here that the term "poor," as used both in the Old and New Testaments, does not always mean that they lacked of material things. Three words used in the Bible, *'ebyōn*, *dal*, and *'ānī*, have been translated as the "poor." They were often synonymous but were used with a different significance and denotation in different books. *'Ānī* was used to describe the poor in spirit, men of great piety who were not always lacking in material goods. However, the quotations used in this chapter referring to the poor, do not for this reason lose any of their force. In the majority of cases the poor in worldly goods were the ones in mind, and where that is not the case the context, as in the above from St. James, usually makes it clear. See "Encyclopedia Biblica."

lowly, "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?" (St. James ii, 6.) James, like most of the Jews of his time, had thought that when the Messiah came he would immediately revolutionize the affairs of this world. This expectation had been with the Jews for many centuries, and it will be remembered that Isaiah prophesied the coming of a revolution which would make men more precious than gold, and that a new nation would arise, wherein everyone should help his neighbor. The carpenter will encourage the goldsmith, "and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil." (Isaiah xli, 7.) Even more in the spirit of revolution and socialism is this prophesy: The people "shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isaiah lxv, 21–2.)

It is perhaps well to keep in mind that in the time of Jesus the rich were very powerful and that with them the priesthood was closely allied. It is true that the words of those who defended the powerful and prosperous have not been transmitted to us, but that does not mean that their voices were not dominant in the Jewish world of their day. Then, as now,[1] there were priests—men of little character, less religion and no mercy—who were always extremely careful to preach doctrines palatable to the rich. Although successful and power-wielding, priests of this sort

[1] Frederick W. Robertson's words on this point are important. "For three long centuries," he says, "we (the clergy of the Church of England) have taught submission to the powers that be . . . Shame on us! We have not denounced the wrongs done to weakness: and yet for one text in the Bible which requires submission and patience from the poor, you will find a hundred which denounce the vices of the rich . . . and woe to us in the great day of God, if we have been the sycophants of the rich instead of the redressers of the poor man's wrongs." ("Sermons," pp. 197–8.) (3)

were publicly flayed by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and Jesus. Isaiah threatened the nation that the Lord would cut off its "head and tail, branch and rush in one day." And to make clear what he meant by this, he pointed out that the ancient and honorable were the head and the prophet that taught lies was the tail.

Jeremiah condemns the same type of priest, saying, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah v, 30–1.) Micah perceives that the root of the whole evil lies in what we should now call graft and he points out that the powerful of his time "judge for reward, and the priests . . . teach for hire, and the prophets . . . divine for money." He also notes their hypocrisy and tells us that "they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us." (Micah iii, 11.) It was against such priests that Jesus battled in his day: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte," he cries, "and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." (St. Matthew xxiii, 15.) "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." (St. Matthew xxiii, 13.) While the priests observed every religious ceremony, they omitted "the weightier matters of the law," which are judgment, mercy and faith. They were like "whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." (St. Matthew xxiii, 23, 27.) In denouncing the rich, the priests, and the dominant powers both in the State and Church, Jesus was, of course, attacking the most powerful men of his time; and we can appreciate in a measure the immense volume of bitterness and

even hatred that he must have aroused against himself, if we can imagine a lay preacher of to-day rising in a diocesan convention in any one of our great cities and after denouncing the rich and their priests, ending his discourse with such words as these: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (St. Matthew xxiii, 33.)

Although Jesus must have known that words such as these would arouse against him the undying hatred of the priests, and of the rich, he was in fact only following in the footsteps of the prophets of Israel, who, as Renan well says, were "fiery publicists, of the description we should now call socialists or anarchists." They were "fanatical in their demands for social justice." (4) All of them defended the poor and entertained the greatest hatred of wealth. They considered the rich as the enemies of society, and condemned their luxury and the many iniquities they committed against the poor. "What mean ye," cries Isaiah, "that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor?" (Isaiah iii, 15.) "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field." (Isaiah v, 8.) The princes, according to Isaiah, are "companions of thieves." Everyone in authority "loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." (Isaiah i, 23.) Similar views were expressed by Jeremiah: "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." (Jeremiah xxii, 13.) "As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not

my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (Jeremiah v, 27–9.) Micah also cried: "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage." (Micah ii, 1–2.) Micah compared the rich to cannibals; they pluck the very skin and flesh from the bones of the poor. They "eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the chaldron." (Micah iii, 2–3.) One would have to look long and without success, I think, to find in the writings of Tolstoy, or even in the literature of modern socialism, anything approaching in passionate bitterness the words used by Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah to condemn the oppressors of the poor; and while many other quotations might be made from the prophets of the Old Testament, showing how, with fierce indignation and even hatred, they viewed the lives and practices of the rich, the ones here cited should more than suffice.

Evidently, there existed democratic aspirations, if not indeed a strong under-current of revolt, among the Jewish masses; and when it was said that the poor heard Jesus gladly, it was no doubt partly because he shared the views of these Old Testament prophets upon the iniquity of riches. Although some of his followers were men of wealth, he does not spare the rich, as individuals or as a class. "Woe unto you that are rich!" he says, "for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep." (St. Luke vi, 24–5.) Similar views were held by his brother James. "Go to now, ye rich men," he cries, "weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are

moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter." (St. James v, 1–5.)

Although these outbursts against the rich and powerful were, in perhaps some instances, largely oratorical and polemical—such as one might hear to-day at a socialist conference—they were also the outcroppings of the spirit of the social substratum upon which Christianity was founded. It was this spirit of the masses and the revolt of the poor which so often found voice in the words of Jesus. But these condemnations are not solely expressive of the intense heat that so often burns in the heart of great agitators and reformers, they are also expressions of the conviction of Jesus that material possessions corrupt and destroy the souls of men. "It is easier," he says, "for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." This was said to make plain the sad case of the rich young man, who had come to Jesus, asking what he should do in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus recalled to him the ten commandments of Moses and the young man answered, "All these have I kept." Whereupon Jesus said unto him, "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor." When the young man heard this, "he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich." And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

Although Jesus repeated over and over again his warning against riches, there were few eyes to see his meaning and

few ears to hear, and once more he resorted to the parable. Speaking to the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, he said: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' " This is a picture of a contrast to be seen in all ages in every human society. Against the purple, fine linen, and gluttony of the rich is placed the naked wretchedness, the gnawing hunger and the utter helplessness of the poor. There is nothing in the parable to indicate that Jesus found anything wrong in Dives beyond the fact that he possessed riches, while his brother was sick and dying of hunger. Nothing is said of the vices or sins of the rich man, nor is anything said of the virtue or faith of the poor man. Yet the one is condemned to everlasting punishment, while the other is taken into the very bosom of Abraham.

Although it would be hard to imagine a picture that should be more terrifying to every devout Christian than the terrible judgment visited upon Dives, it is perhaps possible to overemphasize these condemnations of the rich by crowding them together here and placing them in juxtaposition. And it must be admitted that had Jesus confined

his ministry to this line of attack, we should perhaps never have heard of him—except through some such book as Ward's "Ancient Lowly." This phase of the work of Jesus might be thought of as merely the effort to clear and drain the social swamps that infested his land; it was perhaps the effort to make his native soil ready and fit for the good seed which he had come to sow. Moreover, censure for the rich and love for the poor (both in spirit and in worldly goods) helped him to drive home a great truth,—that you cannot love God and mammon.

But the essence of Christ's teaching is not to be found in these attacks upon the rich, however much they may be a necessary corollary to his true gospel. And this true gospel is stated in general terms in a dramatic scene in the Temple. At the moment when the élite of the religious world of Jerusalem—the chief priests, scribes and elders—was assembled, Jesus entered into the temple. Whereupon the Sadducees and the Pharisees began to bait Jesus. They asked him various questions, but each time his answer put them to confusion. At last the Pharisees, after conspiring together "how they might entangle him in his talk," persuaded the cleverest of their lawyers to go forward and see what he could do to confuse and refute Jesus. This lawyer asked Jesus a question, tempting him, and saying, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" The scene as depicted by St. Matthew conveys the impression that the lawyer was not seeking to get at any fundamental truth nor to learn the central fact that this witness of the truth was seeking to convey. He doubtless considered Jesus a false prophet, who would be led by just such a direct question to give an answer that might easily be torn to pieces. Or, it may be, he thought Jesus would say that certain ceremonies were important, and if such an answer were given, it would increase the animosity of his enemies and awaken dissension among his friends.

However, the lawyer's purpose in asking the question is not important. What concerns us is that the lawyer put the question which above all interests us, in fact, the one which above all we wish answered. And this was the answer: Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." When Jesus made this reply, it is written that "no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."

These words of Jesus not only created a sensation, but it seems they also silenced his antagonists, who were, for the most part, it must be remembered, the leaders of the religious life in Judea. The Pharisees were orthodox Jews, deeply concerned with the affairs of the Church and conscientious observers of all its ceremonies. They held its chief offices, occupied the chief places at the feasts, and sat in the chief seats in the synagogues. They loved to be called "Rabbi, Rabbi," and to be saluted in the market places. They were the representatives of respectability and of infallibility. They believed in many things—so many, in fact, that they could not have told the one underlying principle of their faith. They were in confusion, divided by many dissensions, because not one among them clearly understood the elements of true religion. Who then could have been more astonished than they when, like a thunderbolt from the sky, came the simplest, clearest, most concise and yet complete statement of fundamental religious truth that has ever been uttered? In twenty-eight words Jesus stated for all time and in a manner that may be understood by everybody, the fundamental basis of Christianity—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . And . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

It would seem that of all the sayings of Jesus these must occupy the central position. Every essential thing, he says, hangs upon these two commandments, expressed with such perfect clearness and simplicity. Yet, simple, direct, and clear as they are, Jesus later in the day undertook to make them more vivid. In order, therefore, that no one should doubt them or lack in fully understanding them, Jesus, after leaving the Temple, went to the Mount of Olives, and there explained the meaning of his words by a picture of the Day of Judgment. It is a memorable picture, worthy of the hand of God, and so clear and simple in its lines that even a child can understand it. He says that when the Son of Man shall come in his glory to the judgment seat, all the nations shall be gathered before him, "and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." The sheep, wholly unconscious of their goodness, are astonished. They can hardly believe his words. They had, to be sure, fed and clothed others, but they had never seen him without food, and with meekness, humility and sincerity, they ask: "When saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?* Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" And Jesus answers them: "Verily

I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. . . ."

Surely it is worthy of note that Jesus does not indicate that the sheep will be questioned as to their sect or creed. He does not put to them one question as to their faith or doctrine. Moreover, the sheep are not even spoken of as the faithful or as the believers; they are simply those who love their fellow-men and therefore they are unconsciously righteous. Turning to the goats, he does not ask them either as to their faith, but as they had not fed the hungry, nor given drink to the thirsty, nor taken any stranger in, they are condemned to "everlasting fire." And when the Son of Man speaks this fearful sentence, they cry, in astonishment and anguish, "When saw we *thee* an hungred?" That they had never seen, or they would certainly have fed *him*. But faith alone, if faith they had, could not save them, and as he condemns them to everlasting punishment, he says, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

A perfect title for the above picture would be the words of James, "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead." This thought runs like a thread throughout the gospels. It is woven and interwoven into them. So much so that one might cite scores of the sayings of Jesus and of all his disciples, declaring that there can be no faith, that there can exist no true religion in men, except it find expression in the life and deeds of the believer. It is important not to forget that nearly all of the teachings of Jesus were addressed to believers. Most of those who bitterly combated him at every turn and who eventually crucified him thought that they were defending their religious law; and they especially hated Jesus because they were convinced that he was undermining their theology. Many of them knew *the* Scriptures word for word, and hour upon hour they

discussed the teachings, the laws, and the ceremonials of their church. They were highly respected; they were rich and powerful; they were recognized as the truly faithful. But, in reality, as Jesus so often said, they were pious hypocrites. The essential difference between their religion and that of Jesus is the difference between the sheep and the goats. And this difference James, the brother of Jesus, tried to make clear, when he said: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. . . . Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." These are the words of James, and John says, with even greater force and decision, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Does this not mean that it is only by loving and serving our fellow-man that we can show our faith in God and our love of the Father?

Surely this is one of the greatest lessons of the gospel and it is impressed upon us by constant reiteration. One is constantly running across in the gospel such sayings as these: If we love the brethren, we pass from death unto life. . . . If we hate our brother, we are murderers. . . . We perceive our love of God by laying down our lives for others. . . . We can be disciples of Jesus only if we love one another. . . . "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:" . . . For "this is my

commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." . . . "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." . . . "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Clear as these words seem to be, we are not without those who ask, "But who are the brethren?" "Who is my neighbor?" How easy it is for men to deceive themselves into believing that they love their fellow-men, has been for ages a matter for comment. But this fellow-man we believe we love is a distant and vague object that never requires of us any difficult or distasteful service. We love the poor in abstract, and men in general, and the heathen in foreign lands. We go into great cathedrals or into luxurious houses and there, shut away from the hungry multitude, we delude ourselves with the comfortable belief that we love God and our fellow-man. There must have been men in Palestine who loved God and their fellow-men in this way, and in order that there should be no possible doubt as to the concrete character of true Christian love, Jesus says, "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." And John the Baptist tells us, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."

But is not this merely our good old Tolstoy again? Certainly, there is nothing in the gospel that we have quoted thus far that is in any way contradictory to the teaching of Tolstoy. And so, if there were no other fundamental message in the New Testament, we should be now face to face once again with the old dilemma. Again we should be met with the same tragic problem that confronted and defeated Tolstoy. If we seek to be true Christians, we must fulfill the "demands of love," and give all our worldly possessions to those in need; and even our hut and bed of straw we must share with the sick and hungry. Once

again we come back to the point where we left the broken-hearted and dying Tolstoy—defeated by his wife, his family, his government and society. Shall we then be forced to admit that Christianity and Tolstoyism are the same in spirit and demand the same in practice and that both are doomed to failure? We have said and we believe that men will not follow this logic nor will they make the sacrifices required.

Fortunately, no such conclusions are forced upon us. Tolstoy offers men nothing in return for the sacrifices he beseeches them to make except the inner satisfaction that comes of doing the will of God; that is, of course, a very great deal, and for Tolstoy was sufficient, but when Jesus asked men to give up their lands and houses for his sake, he offered them protection and care in the kingdom of God. And when Jesus asked men to renounce society as it then existed, he promised them the benefits of a new and better society. He promised a hundredfold reward *in this life* to everyone who forsakes houses, land and family to follow him. When he asked his disciples not to lay up treasures on earth and to give no thought as to how they shall get food or drink, he explained that "*your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things:*" *therefore*, "*seek ye first the kingdom of God . . . and all these things shall be added unto you.*"

Tolstoy seems to ignore this promise although he was an unusually thorough and conscientious student of the gospels. To be sure one of his most important books was published under the title, "The Kingdom of God"; but one searches in vain to find in it any discussion of that kingdom. Throughout it is a treatise upon nonresistance to evil and a criticism of violence, of militarism and of governmental oppression. So far as I can find, he does not seem to realize for a moment that Jesus desired, planned or promised men a new social system. Of course, Tolstoy had his own psychology to

contend with, and, like most Russians, he was at bottom an individualist and anarchist. Although he was a careful reader, sensitive to shades of thought and meaning, and unusually observant of an emphatic statement, the above singularly significant and obviously notable utterance of Jesus seems not to have attracted to any great degree his attention. Or, if it did, it seems neither to have awakened in him any emotion nor aroused in him any fruitful speculations.

Curiously enough, Tolstoy frequently quotes the utterances referring to the kingdom of God, but not as if they meant much to him, yet he would have been greatly displeased had he himself written, Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his readers had then come to ask him, what, in his philosophy of life, should one seek first. Jesus, as we know, was gifted in the careful and precise use of words. And he gives this exhortation as an explanation of, a conclusion for, and a climax to, the greatest of all his sermons, the one which contains very nearly his complete gospel. If Jesus had never spoken anything but the Sermon on the Mount, Christianity would have lost little and Jesus would still be recognized as the greatest of all religious teachers. Here he tells us who are the blessed ones and who are the salt of the earth; he gives out his commandments and tells us wherein they differ from those previously given to the Jews; he tells us not only to love our neighbor, but to love our enemies also; he explains to us how to fast, the character of true alms, and gives us the Lord's Prayer; he warns us not to lay up treasures upon earth, as we cannot serve God and mammon; he points out that as all other living creatures are given the material things necessary for their livelihood, so "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things"; and he asks us to take no thought as to what we shall eat or what we shall drink or wherewithal we shall be clothed, but "seek ye first the

kingdom of God . . . *and all these things shall be added unto you.*" Is not this last necessary to make clear all that precedes it? And may we not conclude then that this is the complete gospel; and that, unless we seek this kingdom, we must stagger along with Tolstoy on the wrong road or flounder with him in the swamp?

But what is this kingdom of God that we must seek first of all? This must certainly be the path we are seeking, and, if this is what must be sought first, it is necessary, above all, to find out if possible what Jesus meant by the kingdom of God. The expression, "the kingdom of heaven," occurs thirty-three times in the Gospel of St. Matthew, but nowhere else in the Scriptures. John the Baptist uses it once, and the disciples of Christ use it once, while Jesus employs the expression twenty-nine times. St. Mark and St. Luke do not employ the term, but always speak of the same state as "the kingdom of God," and St. John also uses this phrase once.[1] St. Matthew not only uses the term, the "kingdom of heaven," but he also speaks of "the kingdom of God," and several times refers to the same state simply as "the kingdom." As important as it is to understand the meaning of these terms, so frequently used in the gospels, everyone who has studied the subject considers it a very difficult one.[2] And although no one can be sure that he compre-

[1] As is well known, many Jews were reluctant to permit their lips to mention the name, God. He was the ineffable. For this reason, perhaps, the term "kingdom of heaven" was chosen as preferable to the term "kingdom of God."

[2] There are extensive writings on the subject and widely varying theories. Those who desire to go into the question more thoroughly can find direction to the literature, and some views disagreeing with those set forth here, by consulting: Hastings's "Dictionary of the Bible"; and the article on "Eschatology" in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*. Having just read Albert Schweitzer's "The Mystery of the Kingdom of God" (Dodd, Mead, 1914) the author feels more strongly than ever that laymen will profit most by going directly to the sources themselves—that is to say, to the gospels. The author is convinced that the Rev. Dr. James Orr, who prepared the most interesting

hends *all* that Jesus meant when he used the term, there can be no doubt—and this is the important matter—that on many occasions Jesus refers in these words to an earthly kingdom which he had established, or was about to establish—a kingdom which was to displace the then-existing Church and State of the Jews. One scholar is of the opinion that the term is used in exactly this sense no less than thirty-six times in the Gospel according to St. Matthew. But at other times when speaking of the kingdom, Jesus seems to be referring to a state of mind; and upon one occasion—one only—he refers to his kingdom as "not of this world." This latter phrase may not, however, mean what it is often interpreted to mean. Here are some of his expressions: The kingdom of God is near us; it is among us; we enter it; we must seek it; it is Christ's household; it is the salt and light of the world; it is Christ's flock. It embraces only those who are "poor in Spirit"; who have been "born of the Spirit"; who "have the Spirit of Christ"; and who "worship Him in Spirit and in truth." At one time he says, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God"; at another, "the kingdom of God is come"; and at still another, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you."

This is all very confusing to us, although it does not seem

article in Hastings's Dictionary, would find little to object to in the conclusions arrived at in this chapter. For instance, he ends his article with the following: "The social tendencies of our age give this idea of the kingdom of God a special value for our own time; and we may expect that its importance will be increasingly recognized—on the one hand, in its ennobling effect on the conception of Christian work, and the higher spirit of unity it tends to engender in those engaged in it; and, on the other, in broadening the conception of Christian duty as embracing the obligation to labor for the supremacy of God's will in *all* the departments of private, social and public life. It may be that the time has come for a resuscitation of this idea of Jesus which the exigencies of the apostolic age threw somewhat into the background; and that new applications and triumphs await it in the complexities of our modern social life, which even inspired men of the first generation could not reasonably foresee."

to have confused those who heard him. And it is particularly confusing to us because we of the non-Jewish world have never clearly understood what the Jews meant by the "kingdom of God." No other people have had any vision or ideal in their national history that is quite like this conception of the Jews. Throughout the Old Testament reference is made again and again to a coming Jewish kingdom which was to be administered by God and his angels. The Jews lived in constant expectation of the coming of the Messiah who would inaugurate this new kingdom. Moses, Samuel, David, and other Jewish leaders, were thought to be in the confidence of God; and the Jews were unwilling to think of themselves as existing as a nation or as a people outside the pale of God. When, therefore, Jesus declared that the kingdom of God was close at hand, the Jews understood that to mean the imminent fulfillment of their old hope and dream; which embraced not only the restoration of the Davidic kingdom, but also the attainment on earth of all their religious and spiritual ideals. Among other things it meant to them the creation of a divinely perfect social economy. A conception such as this of a kingdom on earth ruled by the Son of God, was entirely foreign to the thought of the Greek and Roman worlds, and when Christianity spread among the Greeks and Romans, the idea of an earthly kingdom of God, not being in the least understood, was ignored, or so interpreted as to destroy its real significance. And so to-day the expression conveys little to us, despite the fact that it appears in so clear a manner in our daily prayer: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as *it is* in Heaven.

To the Jews it had a very real significance, both material and spiritual. In fact, they believed that the Messiah would immediately become not only the king of the Jews, but that, like other kings, he would destroy by force those who opposed him. They expected him to form great armies

and by violence, if necessary, drive out their oppressors, put down the wicked and reward the pious. They were skeptical of Jesus because he did not come with all the grandeur and material power of an earthly king; and they were astonished that one who could perform miracles did not take possession of the throne and call to his aid legions of angels to fight and destroy his enemies. To such impatient and misguided souls Jesus told several of his parables. The growth of the kingdom was to be gradual, like the influence of leaven in meal, or like the growth of a mustard seed. The kingdom of God would not come in a moment, nor would it come of itself. It "cometh not with observation"; nor with pomp and glory; nor by men sitting down and looking for it. Men had to love, have faith, yield up their possessions, and live righteously in order to enter the kingdom.

Although Jesus did not desire to set up his kingdom by force, the evidence seems conclusive that it was no less his intention to establish the kingdom of God on earth. At the very beginning of his ministry he says, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye! and believe the gospel"; and later he declares: "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." One careful student of this subject points out that Christ "went so far even as to assign an exact date to the kingdom, and this date was no other than the moment when John Baptist, the last and greatest of the prophets, opened the door, so to speak, by announcing to the world him who would realize its cherished hopes. At that moment the movement towards the kingdom began, and men pressed on with ardor to enter into it." (5) Another student has ventured to describe the character of the kingdom which Jesus was to establish. In a note on St. Matthew v, 3, he remarks: "We

lay down as the fundamental notion of the kingdom of God: A community in which God reigns, and which, as the nature of a right government involves, obeys Him not by constraint, but from free will and affection; of which it follows as a necessary consequence that the parties are intimately bound to each other in the mutual interchange of offices of love." (6) Dr. William Smith says that the heavenly kingdom on earth which Jesus was to establish "was to be the substitute for the Jewish Church and kingdom now doomed to destruction." (7) We know and we can learn little (from the gospels) in the way of detail as to the kingdom which was to be established; but we are told that in the great forty days which intervened between the Resurrection and the Ascension, Jesus explained specifically to his apostles "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," (Acts i, 3).

It would seem to be clear then that, in giving us the Lord's Prayer, Jesus was not expecting us to express day after day an unattainable wish; and when we ask, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," we are supposed to be sincerely seeking the support of the heavenly Father in our daily efforts here on earth to establish the kingdom of God—the true and living church of Jesus Christ. What we are first to seek and to strive for then is this new society which Jesus pictures as a thing of priceless value and he tells us that one ought joyfully to sell all that one has in order to purchase such a possession. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." He also likens the kingdom of heaven unto a man seeking precious pearls, and having found one of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Such are the inducements held out to his disciples.

The kingdom of God then was intended to be an actual

living reality. "It is not the idea of Jesus," writes the Rev. Dr. James Orr, "that this kingdom should be confined solely to the inward life. It is rather a principle working from within outwards for the renewal and transformation of every department of our earthly existence (marriage, family, the state, social life, etc. (Mt. xix, 3–9, Jn. ii, 1–11, Mt. xxii, 21). It is thus a growing, developing thing—as it is represented in the parables (Mt. 13). The kingdom is not fully come until everything in human life, and in the relations of men in society, is brought into complete harmony with the will of God. . . . The existence of the kingdom as a present, developing reality is implied in the parables of growth (mustard seed, leaven, seed growing secretly, (Mt. xiii; Mk. iv, 26–32)." (8)

In one of the most striking and misunderstood of all the parables, we are told that in this new society every man, when called, shall do his duty, and, in return, each is to receive the same reward. He who comes and serves willingly—no matter how little he may have to give—shall receive what all others receive. "For the kingdom of heaven," says Jesus, "is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. . . . And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

This is said to be the most difficult to understand of all the parables of Jesus. The Rev. M. F. Sadler and the editor of the Cambridge Bible, in their commentaries upon the Gospel of St. Matthew, tell us that there are many possible interpretations and applications of this parable. The Rev. Mr. Sadler says that "its difficulty is that it makes the Lord of the Vineyard act unfairly in giving the labourers who had worked one hour, and that in the cool of the evening, the same remuneration with those who had worked twelve hours, some of which were passed under the noontide heat." (9) The only explanations that appear satisfactory to the commentators are that this is either a "call of individual Christians at different ages of life to serve God," or a call to "the Gentiles at a much later period in the history of the world," and the putting of them "on a footing of perfect equality with His ancient people." The latter the Rev. Mr. Sadler considers the true explanation and informs us that "it was the greatest change in the dealings of God with man that had occurred for 2,000 years." (10) It is extraordinary what remote, vague, and well-nigh impossible explanations are offered to make dark what would seem to be a clear and beautiful

picture of a divine society and of the deeds of a really righteous man—one with a god-like sense of love and justice, literally and truly following here on earth the commandments of Jesus Christ. Here was one rich man who was actually getting through the eye of a needle. He was what Jesus calls a "goodman"; he was like God himself; and his law was like the law in the kingdom of heaven.

Not a little misunderstanding of the gospels arises from their being broken arbitrarily into chapters, which interferes with the proper reading of the context. Just previous to the giving out of this parable, Jesus had been talking to the rich young man, and he had told him, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." When the young man had gone away, full of sorrow, Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." At this, his disciples were exceedingly amazed, and they asked, "Who then can be saved?" And Jesus answered them, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." This seems almost a contradiction. Evidently, a camel cannot go through the eye of a needle, and there is no doubt that his disciples were in much confusion. Whereupon Jesus, in order to make clear his meaning, tells them this parable. There are several things in it worthy of note. First, the lord of the vineyard went several times to the marketplace and made an effort to give every unemployed man work. The ones he obtained early in the morning were probably thrifty, energetic, capable workmen, and, as is nearly always the case, all such men were taken up quickly and soon the marketplace was empty. But several times through the day the lord of the vineyard went back to the marketplace and found other workmen who had not been employed,—very likely because they did not get there early, or, it may be, they were old or incompetent and

during the day had been let go by other employers. Finally, he went at the eleventh hour, when doubtless he found there men whom nobody else would think of employing—men who would be called nowadays the unemployable. The lord of the vineyard was from a present-day point of view a very impracticable and foolish employer. He might have got a profit out of the first men he employed, but he could not hope to get any profit out of the men he employed later, and those he employed last would have been, in almost every case, even had he paid them very little, of no profit to him. Regardless of this, he took them all and gave work to every man who had no work. Not less striking and certainly no less impracticable and foolish from our present point of view was his action in paying the men. He gave them all the same money. He did not haggle with them as to hours or wages. As every man who worked in his field that day had the same needs, he paid them according to their needs. Very likely the wages he offered the first men he employed were the highest for that class of work and it may be for any kind of work, and that same high rate he gave to all. He was giving equal pay for unequal work. He was giving to every man according to his needs, not according to his ability. He was working on that generous and divinely just principle which has been held by communists in all ages: From every man according to his ability, to every man according to his need. One of the complaints against modern trade unionism is that sometimes it forces employers to pay equal pay for unequal work, and that the old and less capable must be paid the same as the young and active. Here it was the workmen who objected to this arrangement, and the goodman rebuked them, saying: "I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. . . . Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" There are then two chief points in this parable. First, we are given a picture of a generous, loving, rich man, who is

bestowing all he has—for that is what it would have meant eventually—upon those who labor for him, and this is an illustration of a rich man who can enter the kingdom of God. Second, we are given an example of the laws of production and distribution in an ideal society. Everyone must serve when he is called and labor according to his ability, and in return everyone is to receive what he needs.

The kingdom of heaven here pictured was not merely a vague dream of a state that some time in the far distant future would be established. Jesus was at that moment laying the foundations of his new kingdom and he boldly declared that it would soon displace the unjust society then existing. In the gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke he promises a hundredfold reward in this life for everyone who forsakes houses, land, and family in order to follow him. Land and houses are always mentioned as the things which must be given up, and this means, of course, that upon entering this new society, men must renounce individual property. The wealth of this world is to belong to the entire brotherhood, and its members are to draw what they need from the common store, exactly as the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air draw their sustenance from the earth. No poetry in the New Testament is more beautiful than these words of Jesus: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The wealth which was created for the use of all living things has been taken in human society by the clever and the strong. It has become their private property and at the same time the source of most of our social wrongs. But this hoarding of riches has been done through fear of pov-

erty and of suffering, and so Jesus gives us this assurance that if men will but dispose of all their individual wealth and take a place in the new society, everything that they require on earth will be supplied to them. He who seeks first this kingdom of God—that is, this new and just society, need have no fear for the morrow; all that he requires in life will, without thought, care, or worry, come to him who honestly serves. Everyone who enters the new state is to share with all the rest the possessions of this rich and bountiful earth.

Although Jesus says that a place in the new society is of such value that no one can estimate its worth, those to whom he preached of the new kingdom were full of doubt. It was all very new and strange; and it was especially hard for them to understand how it was possible for men to give up everything and still have everything. If they gave up houses and lands for his sake and put everything into the common fund, how could they be sure that misfortune would not overtake them? But Jesus assures them that they will have food, clothing, meat, and drink; and how tenderly he pleads with those in whom doubt persists! "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

His assurances include all the necessaries of this life, and it is notable that never at any time did Jesus forget the material needs of the human body. In the Lord's Prayer we find, "Give us this day our daily bread," and at many of the gatherings where Jesus preached he fed the people. He liked to contrast himself with his cousin, the austere ascetic, John the Baptist. "For John the Baptist," he says, "came neither eating bread nor drinking wine"; but "the Son of Man is come eating and drinking." And because of the life that he lived on earth he was called by his enemies a winebibber and a friend of publicans and sinners. His care for all in hunger was neverfailing, and

at one of the last meetings with his disciples he established the Lord's Supper and gave them all bread and wine. Even after his Resurrection he is reported by St. John to have appeared to seven of his disciples on the border of the sea. They had been fishing, but had caught nothing and were very much disheartened. Jesus calls out to them: "Children, have ye any meat? . . . Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." And later, he says, "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. . . . Come and dine." After eating, he asks Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me . . . ?" And when Simon answers, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee," Jesus says to him, "Feed my lambs." A second and a third time he asks, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" And each time he says unto him, "Feed my sheep." How touching is this solicitude of Jesus for the physical man; and how cheering it must have been to those lonely fishermen to hear the words, "Come and dine"!

And it is notable that the little group, which attended Jesus wherever he went, had certain possessions, although, of course, they were put into the common treasury, and a chest or bag was carried containing the sum of their worldly wealth. Every luxury was looked down upon, and it will be remembered that when Mary was bathing the feet of Jesus with the precious ointment, the wily and thrifty Judas rebuked her for her extravagance, pointing out that a large sum might have been obtained from the sale of the perfume and all that given to the poor. Strange to say, Judas was designated as the banker of the new society and it was his duty to take money from the bag to buy the food the disciples needed as well as to give alms to the poor. It is difficult to understand why Judas should have been selected as the treasurer of the new society, as St. John tells us, "Jesus knew from the beginning . . . who should betray him" (St. John vi, 64); and before Jesus was

betrayed, John suspected Judas of hypocrisy and thievery. It does seem remarkable that Jesus should have endangered the existence of the new society, of his Church, of indeed the very kingdom of God on earth, by choosing a thief and a traitor as the trustee of all its funds. Renan remarks, after dealing with the communism of Jesus and his disciples: "Alas! the practical drawbacks of the theory were not long in making themselves felt. A treasurer was required, and Judas of Kerioth was chosen for that office. (St. John xii, 6.)" (11) Although Renan apparently believed that a dishonest treasurer must be the inevitable affliction of every communist society, he does not venture an opinion upon why Jesus should have chosen Judas for this office. Jesus must have had some reason for so doing, and one explanation which seems plausible is that Jesus must have intended the life of Judas to be an everlasting lesson to the disciples, to the new society, and to his Church. This point of view is supported by what happened to Judas later. He purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. (The Acts i, 18.)

Is not the same great lesson to be found here which is so often taught elsewhere in the gospel—that one cannot serve God and mammon? And may it not well mean that if the disciples of Jesus use the common funds of the kingdom for their own benefit, that this will be the betrayal of Jesus, and must end not only in destroying him, but in the extinction of the Church and of Christianity? Through the ages the Church has been the depository of billions of money, given with the intention that it should be used for the benefit of the poor, and at one time the Church owned two-thirds of all the land of Europe. And is it not now established beyond all dispute that the clergy often appropriated the funds of the Church and used them to satisfy their own gluttony? Certainly this was true of many of the monastic

orders, and for this reason St. Francis commanded his followers to have no personal wealth, and the community or monastic order to possess no property whatever. This was an attempt on the part of St. Francis to keep his followers free from all temptation. Judas would appear to be a symbol of love of mammon working even in the bosom of the new society; and his avarice, theft, treason and death to be a lesson to the Church in all ages.

Whatever may be the true meaning of the life of Judas, there can be no doubt that it was the intention of Jesus that the funds of his Church—that is to say, of the earthly kingdom of God—should be owned in common, and that the lives and property of all in the new society should be devoted to the commongood. There the exalted shall be abased, and the humble shall be exalted. There "the chiefest shall be the servant of all." The greater shall not be he that sitteth at meat, but he that serveth the meat, and Jesus likened himself to the servant, "I am among you as he that serveth."

These were difficult teachings; not only hard for the world to understand, but hard also for those immediately around him to understand. That they did not readily grasp the fundamental idea of this new society is made clear by the fact that Jesus strove in many ways to explain how his kingdom would be imperiled and ruined unless each man clearly understands that he must be the servant of all in the new society. Surely it is of great significance that, on the evening before his betrayal, while at supper, Jesus enacted for the instruction of his disciples a scene to illustrate this perhaps most fundamental of all his lessons. He arose, laid aside his garments, took a towel, and girded himself. He poured out a basin of water and washed the feet of the disciples, one after another. And when he had finished, he asked them, "Know ye what I have done to you? *Ye call me* Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. . . . If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Evidently, Jesus impressed this last thought deeply upon his followers, and it is reported that in the forty days he spent with them, after his resurrection, he taught them the things "pertaining to the kingdom of God." We have no report of what he said during those forty days, but it is not impossible that if we had, our duties as Christians might be made quite clear. There might then be for us no more such dilemmas as confronted Tolstoy. Unhappily, we can only gather by inference from the acts of the Apostles, something of what he must have said at that time.

The Word of God had been spoken, the personification of that Word was gone from the earth and the disciples went out *to do* the Will of God. If, therefore, we seek to find out exactly how Jesus meant us to live, the first thing we must do is to study the acts of these disciples. What did they do immediately after he left them? How did they fashion their way of living and how mold their social institutions, when full of the great inspiration of his divine spirit?

They continued, it is written, for a time with one accord in the Temple and breaking bread from house to house. They did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. There is every evidence of a tremendous exaltation of spirit among them. The new vision had taken such possession of them that men thought they were drunk and mocked them saying, "These men are full of new wine." They did extraordinary things and talked in an astonishing manner. They were so filled with the Holy Ghost that their thought, their imagination and their deeds amazed even them-

selves. Many wonders and signs were done by them; and they continued steadfastly, it is said, in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers.

So determined were they to establish the kingdom of God, that "*all that believed were together, and had all things common.*" (*Acts ii, 44.*) *They sold all their possessions and goods and divided them amongst each other, "as every man had need." (Acts ii, 45.) When possible they ate at a common table, and, following out the spirit of their master, the apostles waited upon all the others, as an example of service. They were one family; and the love that loves its neighbor as itself, which to-day we rarely see outside the family, spread, through the labors of these first disciples, wider and wider among the peoples of Palestine and the neighboring states. In one day there were over 3,000 disciples enlisted in the kingdom of God on earth. And of them it is written: they "were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. . . . Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet." Distribution was then made to "every man according as he had need." (Acts iv, 32, 34-5.)*

The proper ending of this volume is here since these passages answer all our questions. They solve our main problem and point out to us the way to truth. They are the essence in the gospel that men do not wish to understand. Here are the clear and beautiful passages, brilliant with illumination, pointing the way. It could only be an anti-climax to follow these lines by comment, and certainly they need no interpretation. The teaching we find here is so simple, clear and direct that any child can understand it.

The fact stands out beyond dispute that Jesus Christ was a communist; and that communism was the material basis upon which he built his kingdom of God. There is no other possible reading of the scripture. During his ministry he and his disciples were organized as a communist group; and after Judas had robbed the treasury and Jesus had been crucified, his faithful followers at once set to work to reorganize and carry on the communistic society which he had founded. They prayed and baptized, they preached and healed; but this, too, they did—they had all things common. Neither was any among them that lacked. We fail, then, as Christians because we have abandoned communism. We have accepted and approved a social system in which the seed of Christianity will not grow and its leaven will not work. For the same reason Tolstoy failed. He was an individualist who was never able to appreciate the need or comprehend the ideals of communism. He never sought or worked for a new society wherein the spirit of Christianity could thrive. He undertook the impossible; he tried to be a perfect Christian in this world. Jesus saw the impossibility of that and founded a kingdom which, as he said, was not of this world. The moral laws in the Sermon on the Mount and in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, which Tolstoy found impossible to obey in present society, are not the laws and ethics of this world, they are the laws and ethics of the kingdom of God and can only be obeyed in a communist society. That Jesus did not expect men to obey these laws in competitive society is evident; otherwise why should he and his disciples have established for themselves a communist circle?

The answer then to the question as to what we should do now is clear. The Christian must first do what Jesus and his disciples did,—seek the kingdom of God. And this involves a determination to communize society. He must

labor to change the economic basis of social life and make it possible for men to share as nearly equally as possible in the work and in the rewards of life. The first rule of the new society must be, *From each according to his ability, to each according to his need;* and the second, *He who will not labor neither shall he eat.* The latter does not, of course, apply to those incapable of labor, such as the weak, the helpless, the crippled, the aged and the defective. It is a law to govern the economic life of those who are sound in mind and body. The first rule concerning work and its reward is laid down by Jesus in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, and the second is laid down by Paul. In the new society every one capable of labor must serve when he is called and work according to his ability; and in return every one is to receive whatsoever he needs. According to the teaching of Jesus, we must not only love God, but we must also love others as ourselves; and in order that we may do both, we must pray and labor too that God's Kingdom shall come on earth as it is in Heaven. When it comes we need take no thought for the morrow, nor lay up treasures for ourselves. We shall labor with peace and with joy, knowing that our due reward cannot fail us. We shall do unto others as we would have others do unto us—how then can there be among us hunger and misery, brutality and oppression, lying and hypocrisy, hatred and fear? The Sermon on the Mount will be our law and gospel; it will be—as it was meant to be—the ethics of the new society, of the veritable kingdom of God on earth, wherein we, the sons of one loving Father, shall be colaborers and copartners; possessing in common the products of our toil and all the vast riches of the bountiful earth which our Father has given us.

PART II

CHAPTER VI

COMMENTARY UPON COMMENTATORS

They "hear the word of the kingdom and understand it not."

SURELY to any unbiased and thoughtful student of history, the communistic efforts of the early Christians must seem of great significance. They show unmistakably what the disciples did immediately after their great teacher was taken from them. Jesus came to bear witness unto the truth and all of his truth he gave to his little group of disciples. Among his last recorded words to them were, "If you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." The emphasis was upon deeds—upon what he wished them to do. Who can believe that, with the spirit which then possessed them, they could immediately have done something *not* desired by the Master? They were then making their supreme sacrifices and doing the greatest deeds of their entire lives, and they were seeking first—there can be no doubt of it—the kingdom of God, and were working out the laws and customs of the new society.

It is strange that these scenes and acts should not have attracted more attention from the leaders of religious thought, and it is amazing to observe the contemptuous manner in which the popular expositors treat of this early Christian communism. They preach it, as Rauschenbusch points out, with a sort of "deprecatory admiration. It is so useful for proving how noble and loving Christianity was, but it is so awkward if anybody should draw the conclusion that we to-day ought to share our property. But many an ecclesiastical body would be happy if it had

as much Scripture to quote for its favorite church practices." (1) As an example of what Rauschenbusch means in this last sentence, let us recall how often we are reminded from the pulpit that Jesus said "the poor ye have always with you." To those to whom these words appear as the most important utterance of Jesus upon social questions, Hermann Kutter, the Swiss clergyman, addresses this rebuke: "It is terrible that you should call to mind the divine word only when it is to legitimatize your mammon." (2)

The manner in which the commentators interpret the passages describing the early Christian communism often gives evidence of ignorance, prejudice and malice. These are strong words, but they are just. Some of the most learned students of the Bible seem to be wholly ignorant of the meaning of communism. Many of them could not have taken the trouble to look up a definition of the word. Moreover, they are so prejudiced against what they think of as communism that they refuse to entertain for a moment the thought that Jesus could have been a communist. And lastly, they are so full of malice that they search for every scrap of evidence obtainable in the effort to prove that communism was neither advocated by Jesus nor practiced by his disciples. A few show so much bias that they twist verses which actually support communism into arguments against it. Fortunately, the sources of light on the subject can be dealt with in a few pages and we shall take them up and consider them. Smith, Dollinger, Harnack, Pfleiderer, "The Encyclopedia Biblica," "The Catholic Encyclopedia," the new "Shaff-Herzog Encyclopedia" and many other authorities use over and over again the same few verses as arguments against communism. "The Catholic Encyclopedia" sums up its conclusions as follows: "The New Testament teaches complete self-denial, but not communism; and to conceive of the first congregation in Jeru-

salem as communistic is to misunderstand both the passage (*sic*) describing it (Acts ii, 5) and Christianity." Even the citation is incorrect in this instance. And instead of one there are several passages "describing it"; but perhaps the writer thought them of too little consequence to require his personal attention when preparing his condemnation of communism.

"The Encyclopedia Biblica" ends its more careful study with these words: "(Still) it is not true that communism was prescribed as obligatory. . . . In any case the community of goods did not last long, though the view that it came to an end when the society was dispersed by the persecution (Acts viii, 1–4) is no more than a conjecture." We are strongly of the opinion that the latter is not a conjecture. The letters of the younger Pliny show how savagely the early Christian organizations were suppressed under the Roman emperors. The Christians were not permitted to assemble; and their attempts to eat at the same table were looked upon with suspicion. They were feared as conspirators and as revolutionists and their groups were invariably dispersed. Of course this made communism of any sort impossible. The other point made in the article—that communism was not obligatory—may be sound, but another interpretation of the verses upon which the conclusion is based, seems to us more plausible. We doubt if any conclusion can be arrived at because certain important facts are lacking. The position taken by "The Encyclopedia Biblica" is that taken by nearly all the scholars and seems to us very clearly stated by Dr. William Smith who says that "the community of goods, which he (St. Luke) describes as being universal amongst the members of the infant society, is specially declared to be a voluntary practice (Acts v, 4), not a necessary duty of Christians as such (comp. Acts ix, 36, 39; xi, 29)." (3) Let us see. Dr. Smith refers here to the story of Ananias and Sapphira who sought to become

members of the new Church. They sold all their possessions, but, fearing to burn their bridges behind them, they kept secretly a portion of their money, the rest of it being laid, as the practice was, at the feet of the Apostles. A knowledge of this treachery led Peter to accuse Ananias, and he told him that Satan had filled his heart. "Thou hast not lied unto men," said Peter, "But unto God." And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down dead. Later, when Sapphira came to Peter, he accused her also, whereupon she fell down dead. (Acts v, 1–10.) The significant sentence, however, is verse four, wherein St. Peter says to Ananias, "Whiles it (the property) remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" It is impossible to see how this specially declares that the communism within the Church was a voluntary practice; it would seem rather that St. Peter was here explaining to Ananias that he had the choice either of entering or of not entering the Church, and that that was voluntary. The property was his own, and he might have kept it and remained out of the Church. But if it were not then the law or custom of the Church that every penny from the sale of one's property had to be given to the Church, when one entered it, why was it so great a sin for Ananias to offer only a part of his property to the Church? He should rather have been commended for that.[1]

The other cases cited by Dr. Smith are interesting. Acts ix, 36, 39, tell the story of Dorcas, who "was full of good works and almsdeeds." She appears to have been indefatigable in her service to the poor, and when she was dead, St. Peter was asked to come and see her. "And all the widows stood by him weeping and shewing the coats and

[1] The Rev. Frederick W. Robertson is one of the few clergymen to understand these passages to mean compulsory communism, and that the early Christians "virtually compelled private property to cease." ("Sermons," *p.* 195.)

garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them." The fact that Dorcas had many coats appears to Dr. Smith as proof that she was not a communist; which, of course, is quite absurd, since her entire life was devoted to the making of these garments for the poor. The Acts xi, 29, deals with a time when there was a great distress in Judea and efforts were being made throughout the entire Church for the relief of the brethren there. The actual words are these: "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea." It is curious that this verse should have been chosen as an argument against communism, as it immediately calls to mind the very slogan of the communists: "To each according to his need; from each according to his ability." The fact that the mother of Mark had a house in Jerusalem is also used by commentators to prove that communism was not universal. But it does not say in Acts xii, 12, that she owned the house. Moreover, it does not appear that the early Church attempted to set up any establishment in which the members were compelled to live. They may have been deterred by fear of the law, or they may have thought, as many later communists have thought, that dwelling together was unnecessary in a communistic community. Certainly nothing in this verse, nor in any of the other verses cited, can be accepted as proof that it was not the law or custom of the Church that those who possessed land or houses should sell them and give the proceeds to the Church.

One commentator declares boldly that there was not a single trace of communism in the Church outside of Jerusalem, except "perhaps in 1 Thess. iv, 11, and 2 Thess. iii, 10, 11, there is a germ or beginning of such a movement, but it is most severely rebuked by Paul." (4) As it happens, these particular verses are anything but a condemnation of communism. In fact, in one of these verses

Paul sets down this law which has been, in all ages and countries, an ideal and often the favorite rule among communists: "If any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thess. iii, 10.) One of the oldest grievances against existing society held by communists is that they who work least eat and enjoy most. In the other verse cited, Paul points out to the Thessalonians that when he was with them he "wrought with labor and travail night and day," in order that he might not be dependent upon them. To every communist this verse would be proof that Paul was a good communist. Here and in 1 Thess. iv, 11, Paul begs the Christians not to defraud their brothers in any manner, but to love one another and *to work with their own hands.* As this, too, is sound communistic doctrine, we find not one word in any of the verses cited that contains a single criticism of communism. On the contrary every one of the verses would receive the enthusiastic approval of communists. The use of verses such as these to condemn the most ardent supporters of the very principles they assert, inclines one to think that the misrepresentation may be intentional. In any case it leads one to wish that Jesus and Paul had commanded men, as St. Francis of Assisi did, not to make any commentary upon their preaching "under pretext of explaining it." (5)

If we look at the communistic attempts of the immediate followers of Jesus in an understanding and sympathetic way, it throws a flood of light upon the gospels. Indeed there are certain texts in the Scriptures which can hardly be understood except in the light of communism. As we have seen, certain practices advocated by Jesus appear to be not only unwise, but also impracticable and well-nigh incomprehensible in a society based upon private property. How could anyone except an extreme visionary urge a man in modern society to take no thought for the morrow and refuse to consider where and how he can obtain food, drink,

clothing, and shelter? "Take no thought for your life," said Jesus, "what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on."[1] (St. Luke xii, 22.) Too little thought is given to anything else in modern society, and we all know that if we neglect these things we are visited with the heaviest penalties of sickness, disease and death. It is compulsory in present society to give our chief thought to the material needs of ourselves and those dependent upon us. Such thought is the basis of our agriculture, our mining, our manufacturing, our commerce. It is said that we shall not lay up treasures upon earth. Yet among the proudest achievements of modern civilization is our national wealth and the immense growth of capital,—in houses, lands, factories, and in the great resources of the insurance companies, banks and trust companies. Men are thus engaged in laying up treasures upon earth in order to insure themselves and their dependents against want and to avoid being crushed and destroyed in the competitive strife of modern society. But while all this is imperative to-day, if there were a community of goods, men who laid up treasures of their own would be convicted, as Ananias and Sapphira were, of avarice and treason.

It is said that no one can serve God and mammon. That is undoubtedly true in modern society, but in a communist society it would be almost impossible to serve mammon. Not to serve our fellow-men in such a community would be looked upon as the greatest of all crimes. In serving mammon in present society one is doing what everyone else is doing and therefore one feels oneself justified; in serving mammon in a communist society one would become an outlaw. Paul says that the love of money is the root of all evil; but how can this love of money be destroyed in

[1] Farrar says, "This rendering is *now* unfortunate, since it might be abused to encourage an *immoral* carelessness." ("The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: The Gospel According to St. Luke," p. 227.)

present society, where literally everything, including life itself, is dependent upon the possession of money? Undoubtedly the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word of God and force it to become unfruitful. The poor suffer perhaps the most from the cares and worries of this world, and in their terrible struggle for food, clothing and shelter, many of them give little thought to the Word of God. On the other hand, riches choke in the wealthy the spirit of Christian love and service. Yet it is the very nature of the society in which we live that these things should be so. They are unavoidable, irresistible, inevitable.

If we can perceive our love of God only by laying down our lives for others, how could one better lay down one's life than through public service in the interest of the entire community? Yet, nearly everyone admits that modern society seems fundamentally antagonistic to any such spirit. Where, except in a communist community, do men share their food and their shelter? How could we better sell all that we have and distribute it unto the poor than by bestowing upon all humanity through communism whatever wealth we may possess? No matter what we give or what we share in modern society we cannot escape the dreadful sin of not feeding and caring for many who are in want. There comes a point, no matter to what extreme we go, where we must shut up our "bowels of compassion" and give no more. As we know, Tolstoy pictures all this in "The Demands of Love." It seems therefore conclusive that if Jesus did not intend to demand of us social and individual annihilation, he must have planned a new society where men could share with each other their material possessions and devote their toil to the common good. Such is the object of the kingdom of God.

Some of the commentators, it appears to us, do not understand the teaching of Jesus on many points, simply

because they approach certain texts from the point of view of modern society wherein private property is held sacred. Ignoring all that Jesus and his immediate disciples said regarding the renunciation of all private property, they fail to reach a position where they can understand Jesus. When, for instance, it is said, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away," they so misunderstand what Jesus here contemplated, that they are forced to maintain that Jesus did not understand the problems of modern society. This is done by many eminent clergymen. Upon discussing these words, they turn immediately to an argument for charity organization and condemn what they assume Jesus meant, by these words,—indiscriminate charity. They discuss professional beggars, pauperism, and all the evils that arise in modern society from what is called "indiscriminate giving." From an entirely superficial point of view, beggars, tramps, and frauds of all kinds and descriptions are produced by almsgiving, but the real fact, which some commentators do not grasp, is that modern economic conditions produce poverty, just as they produce wealth. They produce both to-day on a gigantic scale. Out of the great masses of the poor relatively few become professional beggars, and there is not one characteristic of these professional beggars and paupers, except their lack of things, that is not also a characteristic of the idle and profligate rich. Modern society produces them both. Moreover, men of this type—both rich and poor—have nearly always existed in society. There were professional beggars in Jerusalem, and Jesus knew them well. Conditions were not so different then from those of to-day that indiscriminate almsgiving could have failed to attract professional beggars then, just as it does to-day. And Jesus, with a full knowledge of these facts and conditions, says directly, clearly, and simply, "Give to him that asketh thee, and

from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." The Reverend Canon Gore and many others, when they are forced to comment upon this commandment, are sorely troubled and they solemnly lecture the over-zealous upon the evils that would now result from any attempt to follow this advice. What Jesus says here is absurd only to those who postulate everything upon the sacredness of individual and private property; to those who believe that the present economic régime is a righteous one; and to those who cannot conceive of a form of society where the amassing of individual wealth and treasure is not a necessary practice. Jesus was laying down the laws of the kingdom of God, the economic basis of which is communism, and the spirit he wishes in his kingdom is that each man must seek to give and not to take, to labor and not to profit, and to lose himself in the life of the whole.

The desire for gain is to-day the dominant spirit in society, and although it is fundamentally antagonistic to the teachings of Jesus, the commentators fail to take account of this. They neither seem dissatisfied with the society which breeds this desire, nor do they seek basic social changes which would remove the conditions that perpetuate this spirit. Not only are they not seeking the kingdom of God on earth, but they seem even to forget that that was one of the chief objects sought by Jesus. Consequently, when they come to many of his sayings, they are in utter darkness and when they try to explain his teaching, they pervert and destroy its meaning. Much of the good seed sown by Jesus reaches the commentators "by the wayside." They "hear the word of the kingdom and understand it not."

CHAPTER VII

THE TRUTH AND THE CHURCH

"Woe unto you . . . for ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourself, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

THAT Jesus instructed his disciples to found their new society upon the economic principles of communism would seem to be evident not only from the acts of the Apostles, but also from the ideals and practices of the early Christian Church. Although all attempts of the first Christians to practice communism were frustrated by the government at Rome, communism was recognized by the primitive Church, for three or four centuries, as the ideal form of Christian society. The few wealthy persons, who, in those early days, became converts to Christianity, gave all their possessions into the hands of the Church. But it was extremely rare for men and women of wealth to look with sympathy upon the poor, oppressed and much hated Christians, and of course the vast majority remained faithful to the old forms of worship. As a result of this cleavage on class lines Christianity, by the end of the fourth century, became not only the religion of the poor throughout a great part of the Roman Empire, but it also came to be considered a menace to the rich and powerful. (1) "And the religious conflict," says Nitti, "transformed into economic conflict, only increased the hatred between the two naturally hostile classes. The rich could not but look down with contempt upon persons who preached poverty and lived poorly. In a proclamation addressed to the

Armenians, Mihir Nerseh, while dissuading them from embracing Christianity, asked how they could lend an ear to a set of beggars in rags, who prefer persons of low condition to those belonging to good families, and who are so absurd as to despise wealth. (2) This warning of Nerseh appears to have been necessary, as some men of great riches, and of noble birth, were becoming Christians. One such was severely rebuked in these words by a magistrate: "Out of love of this vain sect, you wish to descend from all this wealth thy noble ancestor left thee to such a degree of poverty that you will become like the poorest mendicant. I blush for the honor of your race." [1]

In the Old Testament, in the New, and in the doctrines held by the early Fathers of the Church for three or four centuries, we find uniform views upon the subject of wealth and poverty. They almost all assert that wealth is the fruit of usurpation and consider the rich man as one who withholds the patrimony of the poor. According to them all things were held in common in the beginning; the distinctions, "mine" and "thine,"—in other words, individual property—came in with the spirit of evil.

Among the greatest of the Fathers of the Church in the first century were Clement and Barnabas. Clement's Epistle (dated about 95 or 96) was for a long time honored as Scripture and was read in public worship as late as the fourth century. Barnabas was the friend of Paul and a close associate in many of his early missions. Both Clement and Barnabas believed that Christians should own all things in common. "Thou shalt have all things common with thy neighbor," says Barnabas, "and not call them thy *private property*, for if ye hold the imperishable things

[1] This is quoted by Richard Heath, in "The Captive City of God," p. 116, and he cites Surins, S. Quentin, Oct. 31, c. 10; but I am unable to find the writings of anyone by that name. Perhaps it is Laurentius Surius, the hagiologist. (1522–1578.) (3)

in common how much more the perishable." [1] (4) Clement says: "The common life, brethren, is necessary to all, and chiefly to those who desire to serve God irreproachably, and who would imitate the life of the Apostles and their disciples. For the use of all things that are in this world ought to be common to all men. But by iniquity, one says this to be his, and another that, and so among mortals division is produced." (5)

Tertullian and Cyprianus (or Cyprian) lived in the second century of the Church. Tertullian was a man of marked personality and the most brilliant writer in the early Church; while Cyprian, martyred for his Christian zeal, was perhaps the greatest leader of the early African Church. He was a man of wealth, who upon being converted, sold all his property and gave the proceeds to the poor. Not to consider anything as their own, but to have all things common, appeared to Cyprian as "truly to become sons of God by spiritual birth; this is to imitate by the heavenly law the equity of God the Father." (6) The same ideal is shared by Tertullian, who declared: "We have everything in common except our wives. . . . Each one freely brings his offering to relieve the poor, the sick, orphans, widows, travelers and prisoners. . . . We love one another; we are brothers." [2] (7) As it was the practice of the early Christians to give all their property to the Church,

[1] In the following pages the author gives many quotations from the writings of the fathers of the early Christian Church. Most of these can be found in "Catholic Socialism," by Francesco S. Nitti. The reader will also find it interesting to consult "The Captive City of God," by Richard Heath; "Genesis of the Social Conscience" by H. S. Nash, Professor in the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge; and "The New Encyclopedia of Social Reform," edited by the Rev. William D. P. Bliss. Those readers who know either Greek or Latin will prefer to consult Migne where much additional matter on these lines will be found.

[2] These sentences are often quoted. They are correct, but they are detached. *Cf.* Migne, *op. cit.*, "Latina," Vol. 1, pp. 470–472.

so it was the practice of the early Fathers to give, when necessary, all the property of the Church to the poor. Cyril, Augustine, Ambrose and others sold the vases and ornaments of their churches to aid the poor and to ransom captives.

Ambrose of Milan, living in the fourth century, is sometimes spoken of as the ablest statesman of the early Church. It is said he was a true saint as well as the most celebrated of the early Fathers. In his opinion, the mere fact that a man possessed property was proof that he was without love. "Nature gave all things in common for the use of all," he declared, " . . . Usurpation created private right." (8) In another place he wrote, "The soil was given to rich and poor in common. Wherefore, O ye rich! do you unjustly claim it for yourselves alone?" (9) He was much opposed to what we now call individualism, and he argued earnestly that men can only attain completeness by having all things common. (10)

Of the same period was John Chrysostom, considered by many to have been the greatest leader of the early Church. Born at Antioch of a patrician family, he received a brilliant education. When he became converted to Christianity, he gave up his property and lived in poverty. He is said to have been most lovable, "hating lies, worldliness, hypocrisy, and all manner of untruthfulness." The masses were devoted to him and when he died a sect was formed to carry out his views. Thomas Aquinas once said of his Homilies, that he would not give those on St. Matthew in exchange for the whole city of Paris. Chrysostom based all his doctrines and sentiments on a rational apprehension of the letter of the Scripture and carried out his views so perfectly in practice that he was called "John, the Almoner." "Behold," he cried, "the idea we should have of the rich and covetous! They are truly as robbers, who, standing in *the* public highways, despoil the passers-by; they convert

their chambers into caverns, in which they bury the goods of others." (11) Of the rich in Antioch and Constantinople, he spoke with contempt. Many of them were enormously wealthy and enjoyed all the refinements of Oriental luxury. "You received," he said to them, "your fortune by inheritance; so be it! Therefore you have not sinned personally, but how know you that you may not be enjoying the fruits of theft and crime committed before you?" (12)

In the opinion of St. John great fortunes could only be built up at the expense of the poor, and wealth could only be accumulated through fraud, monopoly, or usury. "He never ceases," says Nitti, "from stigmatizing the rich upon all occasions, and notwithstanding the persecution they carry on against him, by which they finally succeed in ruining him, and forcing him to quit Constantinople, they cannot, however, silence him or prevent him from openly declaring his aversion to wealth." "They say to me," he exclaimed, "'Wilt thou never cease from speaking ill of the rich? Still more anathemas against the rich!' and I answer, 'Still your hardness toward the poor.'"[1] The rich men of that time reasoned very much as some men do in the present day, who consider the poor as idlers who do not wish to work, and liken them to troublesome parasites, or to fraudulent beggars who impose upon the kindness of the well-to-do. In their opinion, St. John remarks, if God loved the poor, he would remedy their misery. Such sentiments infuriated the good Father and he replied to them with utmost severity. "You say the poor do not work," he cried, "but do you yourselves work? Do you not enjoy in idleness the goods you have unjustly inherited? Do you not exhaust others with labor, while you enjoy in indolence the fruit of their misery?" (14) St. John deplored the laxity of the Church and believed

[1] This is taken from Nitti. I have been unable to find the Homily.

that complete communism must be restored at all costs. He recalled the first days of the Church when its fellowship did not consist simply in praying together and in holding the same doctrine, but included definite social relations. Not only spiritual things but material things also were common. They ceased to call anything their own, and therefore the root of social evils was cut out. Carried away by his admiration, Chrysostom says: "This was indeed an angelic commonwealth." (15)

Gregory of Nanziansus was one of the three Cappadocians who are famous as the founders of orthodoxy in the latter half of the fourth century, and who are given credit for the final triumph of the Nicene theology. It is interesting to find that he treats the private appropriation of the common wealth as the creative cause of wars, rebellions, tyrannies, and other calamities. St. Augustine, who lived in the same period, went even further and considered private property to be "the cause of lawsuits, quarrels, duels, revolutions, party feuds, scandals, sins, injustice and murders, and so," he pleads, "let us keep from private property altogether," and, indicating that there were opponents to his views, he adds, "or if that is impracticable, at least from the love of it. For by divine right the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: poor and rich, God made them both of the same clay, and poor and rich are supported by one and the same earth. Private property has then no right in nature, but is a right granted by law." (16)

St. Jerome, another contemporary, vigorously denounced the possessors of wealth. "Opulence is always the result of theft," he says, "if not committed by the actual possessor, then by his predecessors." (17) "For all riches come from iniquity, and unless one were to lose another could not gain. Hence the common adage seems to me to be very true: The rich man is unjust or the heir of an unjust one." (18)

Basil the Great, living also in the fourth century, was the founder of eastern monasticism. Addressing the rich, St. Basil asks: "Is he not called a thief who strips a man of his clothes? And he who will not clothe the naked when he can—is he deserving of a different appellation? The bread that you keep in your possession belongs to the hungry; the cloak in your closet belongs to the naked; the shoes that you allow to rot belong to the barefooted; and your hoarded silver belongs to the indigent." (19) To those who say to him "What are we doing wrong? May we not do what we like with our own?" he answers, "And pray, what are the things you call your own? Where did you get them? You are like a man who goes to a theater, and in order to prevent anyone else coming in hurries to take all the seats, thus appropriating to himself alone what was intended for others. In this manner rich men act. Being the first to get possession of things common to all, they make them private property, whereas if each took what was necessary for his subsistence and gave the rest to the poor, there would be neither rich nor poor." (20) In another place, when also addressing the rich, he says, "Unhappy ones that you are! What answer will you make to the Great Judge?" (21)

Nearly two centuries later Gregory the Great spoke in a similar vein. Having been a man of great wealth, he disposed of all his property, costly robes, gold, jewels and furniture and became an ascetic. Not only was he one of the most learned men of the Church, but he was also adored by the people. The Roman Catholic Church is indebted to him for the organization of her public services and for many details of her ritual. "It is no great thing," writes Gregory, "not to rob others of their belongings; and in vain do they think themselves innocent who claim for themselves alone those goods which God gave to all in common. By not giving to others they become homicides

and murderers; inasmuch as in keeping for themselves those things which would have relieved the sufferings of the poor, we may say that they every day cause the death of as many persons as they might have fed and did not. When, therefore, we offer the means of living to the indigent, we do not give them anything of ours, but that which of right belongs to them. It is less a work of mercy that we perform than the payment of a debt." (22) And he says in another place, "It is absurd for people to say they do no harm when they claim God's common gift of food as their private property. . . . Really, when we administer necessities to the poor, we give them their own; we do not bestow our goods upon them. In harmony with this the Psalmist said: He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his justice remaineth for ever. Lavish generosity to the poor, he chose to call justice rather than mercy; because what is given by a common God is only justly used when those who have received it use it in common." (23)

Surely the evidence is overwhelming that Jesus, the Apostles, and most of the early Christians, including many Fathers of the Church, believed communism to be the perfect—that is to say the most truly Christian—form of social organization. This was indeed the dominant belief in the Church—then the refuge and defender of the poor—up to the time when Christianity became "the official religion." As soon, however, as the powers of the pagan world realized the menace to them of the growing power and influence of the Christian Church over the masses, they, in pursuit of selfish and worldly interests, took possession of the Church and successfully diverted it from its true aims and purposes. War was soon declared upon the preaching of communism, and gigantic efforts were made to purge the Church of its socialist elements. It was not long before communists were declared to be heretics and their doctrines to be heresy. Lecky speaks of this period

as "the most contemptible in history," and says that the universal verdict is that the Byzantine Empire "constitutes, with scarcely an exception, the most thoroughly base and despicable form that civilization has yet assumed. . . . The history of the Empire is a monotonous story of the intrigues of priests, eunuchs, and women, of poisonings, of conspiracies, of uniform ingratitude, of perpetual fratricides." (24) Ambition and avarice, luxury and sensuality, dissension and hatred, falsehood and murder—all played their part in the purging of the early Christian Church of its communistic ideas—of its dream of the kingdom of God on earth—and all played their part in the building up of the magnificent imperial (Christian) Church of the Byzantine Empire. "In the first two centuries of the Christian Church," Lecky points out, "the moral elevation was extremely high, and was continually appealed to as a proof of the divinity of the creed;" while "the two centuries after Constantine are uniformly represented by the Fathers as a period of general and scandalous vice." (25) It is a tragic fact that in so short a time the Church of Jesus—intended to be the kingdom of God on earth and the refuge of the weary and heavy-laden—should have surrendered itself to the powers of this world—to usurers, slave owners, ambitious politicians and a corrupt clergy—in a word, to the worst enemies of those within its fold.

This domination of the Church by the wealthy led to many schisms and most of these, Nitti affirms, "were simply economic conflicts." (26) They were struggles between rich and poor, between the communists and those individualists who dominated the Church but had no intention whatever of giving up their worldly wealth. Under the domination of wealth and power, the Church was "not only," Nitti says, "obliged to gradually repudiate its original teachings, but was forced, after long

struggles, to exclude from the fold those who obstinately maintained them." (27) For twelve centuries various groups, calling themselves "apostolici," "apostles," or "apostolic brethren," were cruelly persecuted by the Church. All of them held communistic views, founded upon the teachings of the gospels, and that is true also of the Lollards in England, the Taborites in Bohemia, the Beghards in Holland and Germany, the Waldenses in the south of France, and the Anabaptists in south Germany, Moravia, and elsewhere. How like the practice in the early Church is this rule of the Taborites: "As in the town of Tabor there is no mine or thine, but all is held in common, so shall everything be common to all, and no one own anything for himself alone. Whoever does so commits a deadly sin." (28) All these sects were persecuted on the ground that their preaching led to socialism, and that policy of the Church is defended even to-day by some eminent English scholars and clergymen.[1]

But if these poor men were heretics, what term can be found to describe the Church which denounced them? Wickliffe, Luther, Tyndale, Huss, Munzer, and countless other leaders of the people were assailed not only because of their economic teachings, but also because they dared to give the gospels to the masses in a language which they could read and understand. From the moment when the Church came under the domination of wealth and power, not only was communism warred against, but the gospels themselves were suppressed. The most seditious literature could not have been more carefully concealed by the powers of the State than were the words and teachings of Jesus. When Wickliffe made the first English translation of the Bible, he was denounced by the clergy. "It is heresy to speak of Holy Scripture in English," they said. "Learn

[1] See, for instance, Aubrey L. Moore's "Lectures and Papers on the History of the Reformation." (29)

to believe in the church rather than in the gospel." (30) And later, William Tyndale was publicly strangled and burned as a heretic because he ventured to oppose the dominant powers in the Church by translating the New Testament into English. To get it in type he had to go to Germany, and from there, where it was printed in secret, it was smuggled into England.

Wickliffe aroused the utmost bitterness among his enemies in the Church when he said: "I demand that the poor inhabitants of our towns and villages be not constrained to furnish a worldly priest, often a vicious man and a heretic, with the means of satisfying his ostentation, his gluttony, and his licentiousness—of buying a showy horse, costly saddles, bridles with tinkling bells, rich garments, and soft furs, while they see their wives, children, and neighbors, dying of hunger." (31) Here again the struggle between rich and poor was at a climax; and the Christian Church like the Jewish Church of old had become a "den of thieves." During the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, despite the cruel opposition of the Church, the reading of the gospels and the preaching of communism spread like wild fire among the poor and lowly of all western Europe, who were the mass power behind the Reformation. And the leaders of these peasants suffered of course all the tortures of the Inquisition. Their religious views were only one cause of their persecution; it was class hatred that moved the powerful to exterminate without mercy the revolutionary communists of that period. After apparently adopting Christianity, the ruling powers of the world labored for centuries and still labor, and will yet have to labor perhaps for centuries, to purge Christianity of its communistic spirit. The opposition of the Pharisees to Jesus was the same opposition which has confronted the Christian communists in their battles of many centuries with the dominant Christian Church.

It is a tragic fact that the dominant Church in every age and time has opposed every fundamental reform and every tendency toward true democracy. Not only did the Jewish Church destroy Jesus and try to drive out of Palestine most of the early Christians; not only did the Pagan Church crucify thousands of the early disciples; but when the Christian Church itself became the dominant power throughout Europe, it carried on the most pitiless and relentless persecution known in all history of every militant friend of the poor. What could be more incredible than that the Christian Church should have become in a few centuries so bitterly hostile to the teachings and practices of Jesus Christ that it could assail, with no sign of pity, those who ventured even to quote some of the sayings of the Nazarene? Wickliffe, Luther, Tyndale, Huss, and a multitude of others, whose names are not even known, battled with the clergy in the dominant Church of Europe, just as Tolstoy in our day has had to battle with the Russian clergy, only to suffer in the end excommunication. Nor has the Church ceased her opposition to fundamental social reform,—it exists even to this day. Most of the clergy in Russia defended until recently the Russian autocracy, and the clergy in Germany and Austria have defended to the last militarism, the Hapsburgs and the Hohenzollerns. There is not one organized effort for serious economic and social reform which does not have to battle with the organized Church. The early republicans, the democrats and the abolitionists fought in their day as trade unionists and socialists fight in this day against the most powerful section of the Church. And often without scrupulous care regarding their accusations, the clergy have denounced as atheists and heretics nearly every leader of democracy—whether political or social—who has lived in the last two centuries. While the names are too many to be mentioned, we may recall Rousseau, Jefferson, Paine, Owen, Mazzini,

Marx, Tolstoy and Bebel. Even Lincoln suffered. That most of these men developed into militant opponents of the Church, and one or two into outspoken atheists, is largely due to the fact that they found the Church stubbornly and immovably opposed to every fundamental social reform in the interest of the masses.

Every sin brings its retribution, and while the Church has been successful in purging itself of its communistic elements, it has thereby lost its influence over the masses, and everywhere the clergy are now anxiously searching for the causes of the waning power and influence of the Christian Church. From everywhere reports come that workingmen are not to be seen in the churches. In Germany, Holland, England and France, workingmen in the great industrial centers rarely enter the church, and on occasions show great antagonism to the clergy. In the British Isles the actual attendance in all churches is decreasing. In Scotland there are fewer people now attending church than in 1876, although the population has greatly increased. In all the large cities of England the attendance at places of worship is diminishing. Charles Booth, in his survey of London, discovered that among the best paid workers in "the new and highly respectable working-class streets scarcely a soul attended a place of worship." (32) "The people," says a vicar in one of the largest working-class districts in London, "would do any mortal thing for you except go to church;" (33) and a pastor in Walworth declares, "The people don't want us and they don't want our religion." (34) Excepting the peasants, few workingmen now attend church in any of the European countries, while ministers all over the United States report that they cannot arouse any interest among workingmen. The ministers of several churches in Brooklyn, after a careful examination of their rolls, discovered that out of a total membership of 2,200 attending their churches, only one was

a workingman. When Richard Heath, a number of years ago, made inquiries upon this subject, many clergymen expressed to him their belief that the Church is dead; that the churches are not now true churches, but only audiences; and that although a few cultivated people still hold to the Church, even they are worldly and have no vital interest in true religion. Is this then the retribution that the Church is now paying for its perversion of Christianity? In that case, how long will it be before all churches will resemble the magnificent cathedrals of Europe, whose chief uses to-day are not as places of worship, but as museums in which groups of tourists, guidebook in hand, stroll about, marveling at their magnificence and at what religion must have meant to mankind when their vast naves and transepts were filled with devout worshipers.

A tremendous effort—everything, in fact, except to follow the example of the early Christians—is being made to-day by all the churches to win the support of workingmen. Settlements, missions, clubs, playgrounds, and many other forms of institutional work are carried on in the poorer districts in the effort to reach the people. Dancing, card games, billiard tables, pool rooms, bowling alleys, rifle ranges, theaters, summer gardens, prize fights are all introduced for purposes of attraction. The methods of the Salvation Army and of Billy Sunday are watched with interest by the despairing leaders of the Church in the hope that they may prove effective in gaining the support of the people. But while the masses flocked to the early Church, and with amazing devotion and self-sacrifice laid the foundation for what appeared to be the world victory of Christianity, the Church of to-day repels the people. Its very magnificence is repulsive to the working class, and they feel as uncomfortable when they enter the church as they would if entering a rich man's club. A number of years *ago the* Congregational International Council learned, after

some inquiries, that all but five of the hundred richest men in the United States were either members or adherents of some Protestant church, and that out of 200 men who possessed $20,000,000 or more, ninety-five per cent. were members of evangelical churches. This the workingmen cannot understand; and they lose faith in the sincerity of clergy and church members when they contrast the deeds of these professed Christians with the teachings of the gospel. The very men who often most bitterly oppose the progress of the working class,—fight their unions, malign their socialism, and oppress even the widows and the orphans—are everywhere in control of the Church. And naturally with them workingmen have little in common, and although on all occasions they are always ready to applaud the words of Jesus, they often denounce bitterly the Christian Church.

In Europe certainly the masses stay out of the churches because of their antagonism to those who control the churches. The Czar and his retainers in Russia and the Kaiser and the military class in Germany until recently dominated all the policies of the Church in those countries. From the point of view of many workingmen, Wilhelm II is the typical present-day Christian. Before the recent war the German workers used to print in their radical papers the following declaration of the Kaiser: "From our heart we profess faith in Jesus Christ, Son of God made man, crucified and risen again, . . . and it is by *this* faith we hope to attain salvation and by it alone"; and then as a contrast they would place beside it this order to his soldiers. "With the present socialist agitation I may order you, which God forbid!—to shoot down your relatives, your brothers, and even your parents, and then you must obey me without a murmur." One day he would say, "I and My House, we will serve the Lord," and on the next, perhaps, when speaking to his troops about to depart for

China, "If you close with the enemy, know that quarter is not to be given and that no prisoners are to be taken." A hundred quotations, not less bloodthirsty, might be given from other leading laymen in the Church, and even from the clergy. We have heard them only recently from Dr. Hillis of Brooklyn, although few would go so far as he and the German pastor, Dr. Kessler, who, speaking to soldiers,—probably under the eye of his beloved Kaiser—instructed them in these words: "You must be the mailed fist . . . you must also bear in mind that you are protectors of European trade, and above all remember that you are God's warriors,—the pioneers of a crucified Saviour." (35)

Ever since the time of "that scoundrel, the Emperor Constantine," as Tolstoy speaks of him, we have heard from the dominant Christian powers sentiments similar to these, and the present catastrophe which has overtaken the world, is precisely what might have been foreseen as the certain result of this tragic perversion of Christianity. The ruling classes of Germany carried such teachings to their extreme and, as Tolstoy has said, they "excited the patriotism of the masses of their people to such a degree that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, a law was proposed in accordance with which all the men had to become soldiers: all the sons, husbands, fathers, learned men, and godly men, had to learn to murder, to become submissive slaves of those above them in military rank, and be absolutely ready to kill whomsoever they were ordered to kill; to kill men of oppressed nationalities, and their own working-men standing up for their rights, and even their own fathers and brothers—as was publicly proclaimed by that most impudent of potentates, William II." (36)

But what were the organized churches of Germany doing *when such* sentiments as these were being expressed and

such deeds as these were in progress? Inconceivable as it is, they either approved them or were as silent as the tomb. So far as we know not a church nor a clergyman nor an association of clergymen rebuked the Emperor for daring to utter such blasphemies and for saying that *in such ways* He and His House were serving the Lord. Indeed, the great Catholic party (with 105 members in the Reichstag) was actually supporting the Kaiser and his class in such projects and voting their infamous military budgets. The only group that insistently, stubbornly, and irreconcilably rebuked them, fought them, and voted against their budgets were the representatives of the working class. It was a heretic, August Bebel, who arose fearlessly on every important occasion to denounce the Kaiser and every one of his policies for the enslaving of Germany and the domination of the world. Only workingmen and socialists gladly submitted to imprisonment, to exile, and to every form of persecution rather than make any compromise with This Great House, which, without the consent and support of the churches of Germany, could not have maintained its brutal power. Such acts as these on the part of the ruling classes and of the Church drove Bebel and Liebknecht into the ranks of the heretics and practically the entire industrial working class of Germany out of the churches. And it must not be forgotten that the socialists, at the risk of their lives, organized themselves for the overthrow of the militarist elements in Germany, which were a combination of the landed aristocrats, the plutocrats, the higher ecclesiastics, as well as the leaders of the army and navy. The workers seemed actually on the eve of conquering Germany when the world-war burst forth. And if they then fell as victims to a frenzy of patriotism and were driven like sheep to be slaughtered, let it not be forgotten that since the launching of the world-war the churches have been silent and it has been left to a few social-

ists and heretics, like Liebknecht, Mehring, Ledebour, Hasse, Rosa Luxemburg, and Klara Zetkin, to fight the Kaiser, when it meant being denounced as traitors by their own countrymen and former comrades. It is comforting sometimes to remember that Jesus was also a heretic and was crucified by the Church, which, Christian as well as Jewish, has much to answer for on the day of judgment.

Pascal, arguing that private property is in direct contradiction to Christianity, declares that "not being able to make strong what was just, men have made just what was strong." Seeking to illustrate this thought, he points out that the evil began when one said to another: "This dog belongs to me"; "That place in the sun is mine!" "Behold," he says, "the beginning and the image of all usurpation on earth." How remarkable it is that these identical words should have been used by the Germans when launching the most devastating war the world has ever known! "That place in the sun is mine!" is the sentiment that has cost in one war seven million lives and injured as many people as the total population of France. And while this seems very terrible indeed, the same sentiment, working through the ages, has brought upon humanity sufferings, privations, and deaths that make even this war a thing of trifling importance.

The struggle for possessions, for houses, lands, money and power, is not only the cause of wars, but also the cause in our daily life of cheating, duplicity, trickery, lying, deceit, robbery, murder, and oppression. It is the cause of child-labor, of vile tenements, adulterated food, of overwork, and of underpay. It is the creator of double-dealing, insincerity, hypocrisy, cant and humbug. So long as men practice evil and commit crimes, legal and illegal, to obtain worldly possessions, just so long must they find excuses for their sins and in doing so they develop into Pharisees, Pecksniffs, *and* Tartuffes. They become Janus-faced and while they

persistently row one way they look the other. Many an excellent church-going Mr. Hyde turns during the week-days into a Dr. Jekyll of the business world. And this is to be expected; it is only another proof that one cannot serve God and mammon. It is strange that although we read this again and again, and although millions are confident that this was said by the omniscient Son of God, no one really believes it. Yet failure to recognize this fact is the one common cause of the defeat of the Church, of the monastic orders, and of the millions of individuals who have endeavored to promote or to live the truly Christian life. The love of mammon, "The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches" choke the life out of every spiritual effort.

The Church that now exists has grown rich and powerful and self-satisfied. It has achieved a wonderful worldly victory, and its servants sit with the mighty, but it long ago gave up the struggle for the kingdom of God on earth. By conforming itself to the world, by becoming subservient to the rich and powerful, and by submitting itself to the dictation of Czars, Kaisers and Emperors, it has become a material success and a spiritual failure. By taking themselves out of the world and hiding themselves in convents and monasteries, certain religious sects, on the other hand, have, it is true, attained a degree of perfection, but they too have failed in the chief work required of Christians—the building of the kingdom of God on earth. A few individuals have failed as Tolstoy failed. They have stayed in the world and refused to worship mammon, but they have been baffled and defeated in every one of their projects. Nothing would work, nothing would succeed, and they were looked upon as fanatics and visionaries, seeking the impossible. Excepting the peasant communists, nearly all Christian sects (and this is true also of Tolstoy) have ignored the necessity of an economic founda-

tion for Christianity. When the communistic ideals and practices were crushed out of the early Church, the earthly kingdom of God disappeared, and with it the possibility of the truly Christian life. But now men everywhere are beginning to see that if Christianity is to become something other than "a beautiful and ineffectual angel" as it is to some, or a sham and hypocricy as it is to others, it must have its roots firmly planted in the earth; and if it is to fulfil the purpose of the Savior it must have for its basis a new economic and social order. We must have again on earth the kingdom of God; and this above all we must seek first.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRUTH AND SOCIETY

The people "shall build houses, and inhabit them: and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit: they shall not plant and another eat."
"If any man would not work, neither should he eat."
They "were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common."

It is said that St. John in his extreme old age, at Ephesus, was often carried into the church by the disciples, on account of his great weakness, and every time he was brought there he used to say nothing else but this simple and beautiful sentence; "Little children, love one another." Growing weary of hearing the same thing so often, one of the brethren asked him, "Why do you always repeat this same sentence?" St. John answered, "It is the command of the Master and the fulfilling of the law." On another occasion he said, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." If this be the law and the gospel, how can Christians endure the society in which we now live, where some men, women and children are at this moment dying of starvation, and many millions are constantly in want of the most meager necessaries of life? How can Christians, in a society of their own making, observe without pain and protest, poverty, slums, child labor, low wages, long hours and all the other known evils of our industrial life?

A former prime minister of England, the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, concluded, after examining the re-

ports made by Rowntree and Booth, that twelve millions, or about thirty per cent of the population of Great Britain, were living "in the grip of perpetual poverty." (1) L. G. Chiozza Money, the eminent British statistician, after a study of the distribution of the national income in the United Kingdom, estimated that out of a population of 43 millions no less than 38 millions are poor. This does not mean that they are all in want of the actual necessaries of life, but it does mean that they are constantly hovering about the poverty line. He says, in his analysis, "The United Kingdom is seen to contain a great multitude of poor people, veneered with a thin layer of the comfortable and the rich." (2) Very much the same conditions exist in the other countries of Europe. In Russia the poor are proportionately even more numerous. Tolstoy once said that if Booth's definition of poverty were applied to the people of Russia practically all working men and peasants would be below the poverty line.

The present author once attempted to estimate the extent of poverty in the United States, and arrived at the conclusion that there are in this country in ordinary times no fewer than ten million persons in actual poverty. This means that there are at least this number most of the time underfed, poorly clothed and improperly housed. There are in ordinary times about two million men unemployed from four to six months during the year. Not less than one million workers are injured and killed each year while doing their work, and about ten million persons now living will, if the present ratio is kept up, die of the preventable disease, tuberculosis; a disease largely due to bad housing, bad food, worry and overwork. About 14 per cent of the families in Manhattan were evicted during the year 1903, and almost every year about ten per cent of those who die in Manhattan have a pauper burial. Although these estimates and figures were gathered in 1903, and "Poverty"

was published in 1904, later investigations indicate that this general estimate of poverty was altogether too moderate. In America and Great Britain, the two richest societies in the modern world, great masses must undergo a constant struggle against want, while above them is the thin veneer of the enormously rich.

Christianity, then, like the Pagan religions of earlier times, has not been successful in eradicating conditions of misery for the masses. Men have gone on from century to century for 2,000 years, enduring much the same social evils as those which existed in Israel previous to the time of Jesus. The entire western world, to-day, accepts Christianity, and few men, rich or poor, refuse to call themselves Christians. Yet it is evident from the facts and figures of our social life that Christianity has not brought nearer the brotherhood of man, nor has it molded with justice the institutions of society. Certain it is that we do not love others as ourselves, for if we did conditions of poverty for the masses could not exist. This seems a simple statement of an obvious truth, and yet immediately we begin to think at all we must realize how impossible it is in society as it now exists to love others as ourselves. This precept is difficult enough to observe when we limit it to those of our own household, but how can we follow this rule of the perfect life in all the intricate social relations that exist in our present complicated civilization? How can we in vast cities and industrial centers be certain of fulfilling this law? We certainly cannot love others as we love ourselves if we profit from their labor, if we permit them to continue doing hard work, injurious to their health, while we enjoy all the comforts of life. We cannot love those who make our clothes in the sweatshops; nor can we love the children in the cotton mills or the babies in the cotton fields. We all use rubber for many purposes—to keep our feet dry, for instance. Every stormy day we are

served by those wretched, mutilated and exploited negroes on the rubber plantations of the Congo. Do we love them? Any action we take in modern society may affect men, women and children in China, in India, in the coal mines of Pennsylvania, or in the slum of the dense East Side. How, in the midst of such a maze of intricate social relations, can we be certain of fulfilling the law of love? To obey the law in our limited individual circle of friends and neighbors may not perhaps be impossible; but how can it be obeyed in the larger social relationships? Modern society places difficulties in the way of the truly Christian life which are, indeed, stupendous.

Now and then we hear the clergy beseeching business men to carry Christianity into their business, but they cannot mean by Christianity what Jesus meant. We all know perfectly well that if any business man were to give to everyone that asks of him, and permitted everyone who chose to take away his goods, he would not long remain in business. As a matter of fact, business men must do the exact contrary. They give nothing away; they sell whatever they have at a profit. They strive to get as much as they can in profits, no matter to whom they sell—rich or poor. The object of business is now, and always has been, to acquire riches by out-trading others, and thus to increase both capital and income. Business does not seek to pay as much in wages as it can afford to pay; it pays as much as it is forced to pay. It does not take as small a profit as it can afford to take; it takes as large a profit as it can get. How could the owner of any industrial undertaking escape financial ruin if he were to live strictly according to the teachings of Jesus? He may strive to be kind, considerate and charitable. He may give a large portion of his year's surplus wealth to those in need, but he knows, as every economist knows, that he cannot alter the laws of business life. He will become bankrupt if he is not always in a

position to compete with others; and, to do this, he must watch all his expenses and be certain to get his profits. He must get full return for the wages he pays and he must keep them down to the same scale as those paid by his competitors. Unless he has riches coming to him from other sources, he must in his business make his income exceed his outgo, and this can only be done by dealing according to the rules and practices of the market. In aim and in deed, business life is opposed to the teachings of Jesus; and it is doubtful if there has ever been one man in industry or in commerce who has been successful in harmonizing Christianity with business.

An excellent concrete illustration of this generalization is given by a labor leader who fully appreciated the difficulties which confront every employer in modern society. "In a system of industry," he says, "where prices for the products of labor are fixed by competition, it is the hard, skinflint employer who decides the rate of pay for the trade. Let me illustrate this. 'A' is a good employer, albeit a roystering, swearing fellow, who believes in the maxim of live and let live: 'B' is a church-goer, and a close-fisted preacher of thrift. Both are engaged in the same trade and have to compete for orders in the same market. Each is paying the same wages and finds it hard enough to keep things going, competition being keen and profits low. One day a big order comes into the market, and, rather than lose it or share it, 'B' agrees to fulfil it for five per cent less than the prevailing price. As, however, this absorbs all the prospective profit, and as the works are run primarily to make profit, 'B' cuts down wages to recoup himself for what he regards as his loss. But other buyers demand that prices for them shall be cut down five per cent also. Now, under these circumstances, what is 'A' to do? He may refuse to lower prices and wages and, in process of time, see his works standing idle, whilst 'B's' are increasing in

size; or he may follow 'B's' lead and cut down prices and wages also. The illustration is neither exaggerated nor overdrawn. It represents what is occurring every day. But, if it be correct, how is it possible for 'Christian employers to give to their workmen what is necessary, not only to relieve the pressure of existence, but to make work and life enjoyable?' Employers whose business is not a practical monopoly are at the mercy of the most unscrupulous of their number, which, again, raises the question of whether that is a Christian system in which the selfish rule and the good are compelled to follow the bad." (3)

It is not uncommon now-a-days to hear it said that Christianity has no place in the market, and men in business often acknowledge quite frankly that they are trying to get the better of their fellow-men. In fact, they not infrequently praise modern capitalism because it forces men to survive or perish. Business is a serious and strenuous conflict, wherein everyone is fighting to take something away from someone else. Men are struggling to get on the backs of others, and to reach a position of vantage where they may exploit others. A very slight knowledge of political economy makes it clear that modern life is not only a struggle of man against man, but also a struggle of class against class. Organized industry produces wealth on a scale never before dreamed of; but riots, hunger, overwork, underfeeding, child-labor, sweat-shops, vile tenements and slums serve as a warning to every youth that he must lose no time in getting on the backs of the working people. We all hesitate to admit these facts. We all dislike to feel that modern society is a form of warfare wherein self-interests and class-interests are in constant conflict; but every great political struggle of our time teaches us that to help the poor we must take away from the rich, and to help the rich we must take away from the poor.

If these are the conditions—nay the very laws—of our economic life, must we then condemn without understanding and mercy those who are successful, because they adapt themselves to these conditions? Must we not remember that in nearly every case (there are notable exceptions) the business man, like all others in the community, is only seeking to obtain for his family material security? He is trying to do what seems to him to be his first duty as a father—to provide against the possibility of want among his dependents. And, while it is true that avarice plays its part and that a few men commit crimes and consciously do much evil to acquire wealth, most men in modern society play the game according to the rules. And if they do that, why are they not deserving of all praise when they labor and sweat in factories, in commerce, in transportation and in finance, to acquire for themselves and their dependents the necessaries of life? The spirit behind all this struggle for gain is of course the dynamo of modern economic development. It is the thing which has built up the great riches and complicated civilization of the western world. And it is well-nigh impossible to induce men to believe that this, which we all proudly think of as a grand spectacle of human progress, is bad. The type of civilization which has been built up in the Christian era is conclusive evidence of that. Society is organized on its present basis chiefly to produce wealth, and we see on all sides of us the superb results of its magnificent productive power. Not only some of its banks, trust companies and public buildings, but even some of its churches are built of marble, taken from the choicest quarries in the world. The last are adorned with every art, and contain paintings and sculptures of priceless value and ornaments of gold and silver. Some of them support clergymen with salaries that equal the combined wages of a hundred manual laborers. Everything—even the Church—points to

the fact that the chief object of life in modern society is the production of wealth.

However much or little this development may be antagonistic to the spirit of Christianity, it is violently and inherently antagonistic to Tolstoy's theory of individual regeneration, which, in his opinion, required for its development a rural economic order based upon handicraft and individual production. Even in Russia hand work is fast disappearing; and, instead of individuals producing alone, the great factories of to-day require multitudes of men and highly organized team work. Many toilers now contribute to the making of nearly every article of commerce. Production is in the main already socialized. One cannot live alone or work alone in western civilization. We are in the era of great capitalism based upon the private ownership of the instruments of production. And capitalism is growing: it is spreading all over the world. Cities and industrial centers are steadily growing, and whether modern capitalism is a blessing or a curse it is dominating all life and reaching out to the ends of the earth. Through the agency of capitalism, nature has been subdued and wealth is being produced in such quantities as to stagger the imagination. Think of the billions which have been destroyed in the recent world war without reducing us to starvation or indeed depriving us of many luxuries. And the progress which has made this possible is not to be turned back and, while no man knows to what it will lead in the future, no one believes that the immense economic development of recent years can be checked or stopped. Even if that were the only way to achieve Christianity, as Tolstoy seems to have believed, how many people in the world could be induced to think it desirable? The world is irresistibly moving on. Millionaires and corporations, steam and electricity, congregated work in f[illegible]es and congregated life in tenements are facts. An[illegible]ion is not whether

one can live the Christian life in the steppes of Russia or in some wilderness in America, but whether Christianity is possible in the civilization which now exists about us.

The world we live in is a vast, social structure, intricate and interdependent. Even its widest extremes are knit together, and every part of it is benefited by a widely diversified division of labor and mutual service. And, while the rewards for labor and service vary and bear no relation to justice, there is coöperative production on an almost universal scale, even if there is as yet no coöperative distribution of the produce. Must we follow Tolstoy and destroy all this and go back to the meager production and almost universal poverty of the earlier days? Or is there some way to alter present society so as to make the rewards of industry correspond in some measure to the services rendered? There must be a form of justice applicable to our present society which will make human love and brotherhood possible, and which will thus solve the greatest of all moral problems. There must be some sound, practical and just method of changing society, short of universal destruction, which will permit the brotherhood of man to exist, and which will give to true Christianity a glorious opportunity for development.

This is of course the greatest moral and economic problem now confronting all human civilization. It must be solved, and it will be solved, if not by the comfortable and the well-to-do then by the poor and miserable. Over thirty years ago Tolstoy warned the rulers of Russia of the coming "workmen's revolution, with the terrors of destruction and murder," but he could find no one to listen to him. And what a penalty they are now paying! They looked upon poverty with "stupid levity," as Bernard Shaw says, and they thought, "If a man is indolent, let him be poor. If he is drunken, let him be poor. If he is not a gentleman, let him be poor. If he is addicted

to the fine arts or to pure science instead of to trade and finance, let him be poor. If he chooses to spend his urban eighteen shillings a week or his agricultural thirteen shillings a week on his beer and his family instead of saving it up for his old age, let him be poor. Serve him right! . . .

"Now what does this Let Him Be Poor mean? It means let him be weak. Let him be ignorant. Let him become a nucleus of disease. Let him be a standing exhibition and example of ugliness and dirt. Let him have rickety children. Let him be cheap and let him drag his fellows down to his price by selling himself to do their work. Let his habitations turn our cities into poisonous congeries of slums. Let his daughters infect our young men with the diseases of the streets and his sons revenge him by turning the nation's manhood into scrofula, cowardice, cruelty, hypocrisy, political imbecility, and all the other fruits of oppression and malnutrition." (4)

It is evident that the spirit of modern man as well as the conditions of modern society, are entirely out of harmony with true Christianity. What men now profess and men now do in the world—this that we like to call Christianity—is surely not what Jesus taught. It is rather a universal hypocrisy, which stands as one of the greatest obstacles to a better life. We are deceiving ourselves when we call this a Christian world, and so long as we persist in thinking that we are Christians, there will be little incentive to improve our lives or change for the better social conditions. Nor can any real progress toward true Christianity be made so long as we refuse to see that our lives are in contradiction to the essential teachings of Christianity, and so long as we habitually try to justify ourselves and society, when all the time our lives are wrong and the society in which we live is fundamentally unjust. "However much," as Tolstoy truly says, "we may try to justify to ourselves our treason against mankind, all our justification falls to

pieces before evidence; around us people are dying from overwork and want; and we destroy the food, clothes, labor of men merely in order to amuse ourselves." (5)

We try to justify ourselves in a thousand ways, and the most common of all ways is to use the argument of the Germans in the recent war, "You may think us barbarians, but necessity compels us to do what we are doing." In much the same manner, manufacturers, bankers, capitalists—all men with means—justify the exploitation of labor in modern society. We do not say, as Tolstoy said, "I cannot live so; I cannot continue to live so," and seek a change in society which will make possible economic and social justice. We do not lament or even permit ourselves to admit that the productive classes of modern society are unjustly treated and deprived of a considerable proportion of the product of their toil. How few of us say, "This should not be, and we must bend all our energies to change it;" although most of us recognize, however reluctantly, that it is in violation of the most fundamental of all Christian precepts that some men should be rich while others are dying from hunger. But, instead of organizing ourselves to work for social justice, we maintain a stolid indifference, or we try to comfort ourselves with the thought that it is the *law* of life that things should be as they are and *we* cannot change it.

But of course we can change this law of life, as every day our experience now teaches us. During the great war strikingly fundamental changes were made in the economic, political and social life of every nation engaged in the war. All the energies of several allied nations were brought into coöperation; self-interests and class-interests were in large measure put aside; certain forms of exploitation were outlawed and radical social measures were adopted by the governments, in order that all should work in harmony to the end of achieving a military victory.

And these measures which were taken to achieve a military victory might now be continued as a permanent social policy, in order to abolish poverty, to feed, clothe and shelter the masses and to produce wealth sufficient for all. This is, indeed, exactly what has been proposed by the British Labor Party. If we can cease serving mammon in order to achieve a military victory and joyfully give our lives and property to that end, we can also cease serving mammon in order to achieve a just social order. But unhappily the rich and powerful are not dissatisfied with things as they are; their advantages, privileges and profits are too great in society as it is for them to wish to change it. Most of them, it is true, wish to be Christians, but the Christianity they demand is so diluted as to be worthless as a regenerative. As men put water in their wine, so men dilute their religion and they take of it only so much as will not disturb them. It is this reluctance to face the pressing problems of society—Tolstoy calls it hypocrisy—which presents one of the chief obstacles to any change for the better in society. "If men would only cease to be hypocrites," writes Tolstoy, "they would perceive at once that this cruel organization of society, which alone hampers them and yet appears to them like something immutable, necessary and sacred, established by God, is already wavering, and is maintained only by the hypocrisy and the falsehood of ourselves and our fellowmen." (6)

However, it is not alone hypocrisy that stands in the way of social justice. Long established customs wield a tremendous influence over men's thought and actions. And wealth accumulation has so occupied men from the earliest days of civilized life that it is difficult to make them see t[illegible]h is enormously rich may also be [illegible] interesting passage Tolstoy [illegible]h all the activity of our

modern society is directed, and that which directs the activity of the world. States and governments intrigue, make wars, for the sake of property, for the possession of the banks of the Rhine, of land in Africa, China, the Balkan Peninsula. Bankers, merchants, manufacturers, landowners, labor, use cunning, torment themselves, torment others, for the sake of property; government functionaries, tradesmen, landlords, struggle, deceive, oppress, suffer, for the sake of property; courts of justice and police protect property; penal servitude, prisons, all the terrors of so-called punishments—all is done for the sake of property." (7) Tolstoy might have gone even further and shown how this same struggle for wealth brought ruin upon the Church, corrupted its teachings and blinded its clergy; and, moreover, how it has always been the chief cause of hatred between individuals and between classes. But there is one serious criticism to be made of Tolstoy's words: he should have said that "private" property is the cause of the evils he mentions, since even Jesus, together with his disciples, possessed property in common, and so did the early Church. Since money is the most convenient form in which individuals may hoard wealth, St. Paul was right when he said, "The love of money is the root of all evil," if he used the term, money, to typify personal possessions. To love mammon is to love personal possessions, private property, individually controlled wealth. Common property is the direct opposite. "Before man's usurpation," as the early Christians used to say, the wealth of all the hills and valleys, fertile lands and fields, forests and mines, belonged to all mankind. There are many kinds of property, and the forms of property change from age to age. There is individual property, corporate property, communal property, municipal and state property; and just as the ownership of property varies and changes from time to time, so does the form of property. A few centuries ago,

the chief property of mankind was the private ownership of land and of slaves. Land and slaves produced the wealth of the world, and they were both owned by powerful individuals. Evidently, then, Tolstoy must have meant that *private* property is the root of all evil, since it is evident that few, if any, evils can arise from such public property as libraries, parks, schools, art galleries, etc. No harm, but good, comes to us from such public property as the institutions for public health, fire protection, sewerage and water. Nor is it an abundance of material wealth which is the cause of man's downfall, since the Creator bestowed upon man a limitless abundance in forests, minerals, fertile lands, fruits, nuts, herbs and cereals. Everything required to feed, clothe, and shelter the human body was put into the world along with the human body. All animal life is surrounded with boundless riches. It is not then public property or natural wealth which brings injustice, poverty and mutual hatred into the world. It is the private and selfish ownership of labor, of land and of capital which causes every evil that Tolstoy mentions in his indictment of property.

There was once private ownership in slaves, in mankind. This was undoubtedly an evil and was eventually abolished. There was once private property in roads and in waterways. This was considered evil and abolished. In most of the countries abroad it is considered an evil that the railways, tramways, lighting plants and water supplies should be owned privately, and in most places these utilities have been made state or municipal property. Certain forms of property which have been considered a public nuisance when privately owned have proved a blessing when publicly owned. It is now generally considered a public misfortune that some men should control vast quantities of land, while others are starving for the lack of land, and that some men should control the mineral resources of the world and make

other men pay tribute to them for these necessaries of life. And it is coming to be thought an evil that some men should own and control the tools with which others must work. As long as private property exists in labor, in land or in the necessary instruments of labor, just so long will a few men exploit many other men. In any society where private property exists men must be either in the class of the exploiters or in the class of the exploited. This is the fundamental economic obstacle standing in the way of the love of one's neighbor and the brotherhood of man. This is the cause of all the evils which Tolstoy mentions; and the cause also of our failure as Christians. In saying this, we are only following the logic of Jesus;—ye cannot serve God and mammon.

It is enlightening to observe in this connection that wherever there exists, or has existed, in the world a high degree of mutual love and service among men it has been founded upon a common material basis. The early Christians, monks and nuns had a common material basis for their spiritual life; and even to-day we provide those rendering many forms of social service with material security. In the Army and Navy, in the Red Cross, in the schools and colleges, in the institutions for research, in the Church and in the monastery the workers are not serving their own interests, but those of the community. They are defending, serving, teaching, enlightening and searching out new things. And wherever these high forms of social service exist we find they are usually based upon an assured income, which gives to those rendering this service a confident feeling that the ones dependent upon them shall not come into distress.

Although priests, monks and nuns have been loved and sometimes even worshiped because they have been thought to be above all material lusts, still, if one will but think of it a moment, they have with a comparatively few excep-

tions, always been given material security. This is also true of the Protestant clergy, who are provided with food, clothing and shelter, not only for themselves, but also for their wives and children. Neither the priests, the ministers, nor the monks have been able to live without wealth. Behind them all are great material possessions. They live in monasteries, in nunneries, in rectories and in parsonages, with all the absolutely necessary things of life provided. Possessing material security, they have no fear or dread of want, and may give their thought and life unreservedly and without hindrance to the encouragement of better things. But every father struggling to win wealth is subject to the vicissitudes of commerce. The richest lose their riches at times, and the poor lose even the little that they have, while a considerable portion of the priesthood is backed by centuries of established wealth which assures it the necessaries of life, regardless of panics, industrial depressions and all other storms that afflict modern economic life. Many clergymen are thus put in a peculiar and false position. Outside the sanctuaries men are suffering from cold and hunger; they are fighting for life and for just that material security which every priest has. And if the clergy think at all, they must know that the social conditions about them are not as they should be. Nor can they help seeing the contrast between their own situation and that of millions outside. The needs of the poor press constantly upon them, and realizing that they have not the means to feed and clothe all the hungry, the finer spirits among the clergy are thoroughly ashamed of their own security in the face of widespread misery. Like others who are well-to-do, the better paid of the clergy must often hide themselves and their way of living from the poor. But even if these men and women, who have material security provided for them, could be in truth and in deed *devout* Christians in present society, Christianity was not

meant only for them. It was meant to pervade all life and to bring all men peace of mind, hearts of love and an untroubled conscience.

In saying that to love others as oneself is impossible in present society, an exception must be made in the case of the family. With notably rare exceptions, wherever a family exists there we find this love. A mother loves her children as herself. Fathers, brothers, sisters love each other, and serve each other. On all sides of us we see all the precepts of a truly Christian life observed within the family circle. One member is not well dressed while another is in rags; one is not well fed while another cries with hunger. The members of a family live coöperatively and they eat in common. The generally accepted rule of family life is that each shall give to the support of the family according to his ability and receive from the common fund of the family according to his needs. This is not everywhere and always the case, but it is so much the accepted thing that we observe this practice all about us. And while almost everywhere we see those within the family group loving each other devotedly, rarely do we see the individual members of society, or the various family groups, loving each other devotedly. Within the family true Christianity is at work. It is a success, and even in the families of thieves and murderers we see the members clinging to each other, supporting each other, serving each other, defending each other, loving each other. The most brutal, grasping employer of labor who drives little children to slavery in his mills and who watches his workers go to destruction, loves his own children often with extraordinary devotion.

The reason for this difference between life in the family and life in society is not difficult to find. The preservation of the most beautiful sentiments and practices of Christianity in the family is due to the fact that the family is an

economic unit, and the crushing out of all such sentiments and practices in the general life of society is due to rivalry and competition. The members of the family are not in competition with each other. In this little communist circle everything is shared for the common welfare. There is no buying and selling, no wage taking nor profit making. The sick and the aged, the weak and the incompetent are cared for by loving hearts and hands. Usually the only serious and destructive quarrels that disrupt families and lead to mutual hatred come when the family is breaking up and the property is being distributed among its members. Love in the family often means giving up what one wants, doing much that one does not like to do, giving way to others and having less for oneself. There is everywhere much sacrifice demanded to make true love possible in the family. Nevertheless, having a common material basis for its spiritual life, the family protects all its members; and for a mother and father to love their children, or for brothers and sisters to love each other as themselves does not mean material ruin. In society, on the contrary, where the material basis is competitive, perfect love of others does mean material ruin.

Arguing in support of the practicability and usefulness of a communistic basis for our social life, the late Walter Rauschenbusch, Professor of Church History in Rochester Theological Seminary, declares that we have the material right among us. "Ask any moral teacher," he writes, "who is scouting communism and glorifying individualism, what social institutions to-day are most important for the moral education of mankind and most beneficent in their influence on human happiness, and he will probably reply promptly, 'The home, the school, and the Church.' But these three are communistic institutions. The home is the source of most of our happiness and goodness, and in the *home we live* communistically. Each member of the family

has some private property, clothes, letters, pictures, toys; but the rooms and the furniture in the main are common to all, and if one member needs the private property of another, there is ready sharing. The income of the members is more or less turned into a common fund; food is prepared and eaten in common; the larger family undertakings are planned in common. The housewife is the manager of a successful communistic colony, and it is perhaps not accidental that our women, who move thus within a fraternal organization, are the chief stays of our Christianity. Similarly our public schools are supported on a purely communistic basis; those who have no children or whose children are grown up, are nevertheless taxed for the education of the children of the community. The desks, the books to some extent, the flowers and decorations, are common property, and it is the aim of the teachers to develop the communistic spirit in the children, though they may not call it by that name. Our churches, too, are voluntary communisms. A number of people get together, have a common building, common seats, common hymnbooks and Bibles, support a pastor in common, and worship, learn, work and play in common. They are so little individualistic that they fairly urge others to come in and use their property. Private pews and similar encroachments of private property within this communistic institution are now generally condemned as contrary to the spirit of the Church, while every new step to widen the communistic serviceableness of the churches is greeted with a glow of enthusiasm.

"Thus the three great institutions on which we mainly depend to train the young to a moral life and to make us all good, wise, and happy, are essentially communistic, and their success and efficiency depend on the continued mastery of the spirit of solidarity and brotherhood within them. It is nothing short of funny to hear the very men

who ceaselessly glorify the home, the school, and the Church, turn around and abuse communism." (8)

How very true is this! And how bitter men are when any one proposes communism or socialism as a remedy for our social ills! And so we go from bad to worse. With all our vaunted progress, many social evils are in some ways worse now than they were in the time of Jesus. The Jewish laws were models of merciful legislation and protected the poor in a way unknown to the Roman law, which is the source of our legality. Yet to the gentle and loving Jesus the Jewish laws and customs were harsh and cruel, and he and his disciples invariably contrasted the beneficence of their new society, their kingdom of God on earth, with the cruel world of the Jews. If, however, we examine the merciful provisions made by the Jews for the benefit of the poor in Israel and compare them with the provisions made by the laws of the modern Christian world, we cannot but realize something of what Jesus, the critic of that society, would think of the society of to-day. There were, to be sure, no charity organization societies nor any official system of poor relief such as we have to-day, but, on the other hand, wealth was widely distributed and there was little abject poverty. The masses worked on the land and in their small cottage industries. The laws governing the distribution of the land had a distinctly communistic tendency. For instance, the land had always to be returned after a certain interval into the hands of the family. The olive tree was not to be twice shaken, nor was the vineyard to be twice gathered. The sheaves of corn were to be left in the field, to be gleaned by the poor. The needy were allowed to pluck the ears of corn while passing through a neighbor's field, though it was strictly forbidden that they should use a sickle. Whatever crops grew in the seventh year were for the benefit of the poor. In this manner all the poor shared to an extent in the ownership

of the land and, according to the Jewish law, the land belonged to God alone. Usury was forbidden and all those in debt were to be released in the seventh year. Moreover, throughout the entire Old Testament the people are commanded again and again to open wide their hands unto the poor and needy. They must receive their wages before the sun goes down, and the fatherless and the widows must be cared for and protected.

Merciful as these laws were, they did not satisfy Jesus, and he condemned with scorn the old society and planned as a necessity for man's regeneration a new society. As we have pointed out, he outlined some of the ethics of his new kingdom of God in the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. Moreover, he established communism in the little circle which followed him everywhere, and the Apostles revived this society after his crucifixion. It is not possible now to determine just what type of communism was adopted. Land and houses were in that day the chief forms of property, and these were either held in common or sold, and the proceeds were given to the community. So far as we know, there was no common house in which the Christians were compelled to live. The Christian monasteries were organized at a later period. Nothing then existed, so far as we know, similar to what has been latterly called "Barrack Room Communism." Although it is definitely said that "they had *all* things common," the commentators may be right in asserting that the early Christians did not believe, as some communists later believed, "that all things belong to all." It appears certain that the wage workers kept their own earnings and gave only what they could spare to the Church. The communism of the early Christians doubtless resembled that which has always existed among primitive peoples, and which was, in fact, the earliest form by which property was held. There were sects among the Jews in the time of

Jesus—the *Essenes* and *Therapeutæ*—that practiced communism. And a form of it still exists in the Russian *Mir*, in the Javan *Dessa* and among some of the North American Indians. So far as one can gather from the New Testament, the early Christian communists held views upon the ownership of property much like those held by the modern socialists. The community owned the land and the houses, which were in those days not only the chief forms of property, but were also the forms which could be used to exploit others. Modern socialists advocate the ownership by the State of those forms of property only which can be used to exploit others. And these consist chiefly of the means of production. The early Christians considered property to be a rightful possession of the kingdom, which was, after all, their State. It is, however, not so much the exact form of communism established by the early Christians which should interest us. That must in any case change in structure with the growth of society. The vital matter is the spirit of communism which pervades all the social teachings of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount is filled to saturation with this spirit, and so are many parables and sayings explaining the kingdom of God.

In marked contrast to this ideal conception of social life were the laws and customs of the Jewish Church and State. These Jesus denounced for their cruelty to the poor. But now, two thousand years later, what have we, who call ourselves Christians, to offer comparable to the merciful laws and customs of the ancient Jews? We are infinitely richer and we have marvelous machines with steam power and electricity, which now produce wealth in such abundance that all the world could be easily fed, clothed and housed if we desired to distribute with love and justice our immense riches. We can afford to spend approximately $200,000,000,000 in four years of war and we are not unwilling to devote millions for developing machines for

destruction, but we refuse to feed and clothe the poor or to give ourselves and our money to the obviously Christian work of devising constructive social measures which will bring nearer the brotherhood of man. Before the recent world war men were furious when the Labor and Socialist Parties of the various countries proposed the levying of taxes for the demolition of foul slums and the construction of decent dwellings for the working classes. They were irate and rebellious when proposals were put forward for social legislation which would alleviate poverty or abolish the conditions which produce poverty. How little money could then be obtained to promote those measures which expressed love for one's neighbor! And how much was ever ready for those things which expressed hatred for one's neighbor!

The great world war is over; but, instead of having peace and quiet and good-will toward men, a new and perhaps even more terrible crisis now faces us. Civil wars and class hatred have followed upon the heels of international strife. After centuries of oppression and degradation the poor of Russia, Hungary, Austria, Bohemia and Germany are, at the moment the author writes, putting down the mighty from their seats and exalting them of low degree. They are seeking to fill the hungry with good things and are driving the rich empty away; 300,000,000 hungry and desperate human beings, under the Red Flag, are marching to take possession of their inheritance. With a suddenness that astounds and bewilders us, democracy stands before us unchained! The people are "in mutiny, in confusion, in destitution"; but are they "on the eve of fiery wreck and madness?" Anxiously we are all asking, what are they going to do? We have seen some of them become "Bolshevist demons," dealing now to others the same injustice that has been dealt for centuries to them. But we have seen others among them, deploring riot, bitterness

and rage, begging and beseeching the masses to be merciful and to begin at once to lay the foundations of a new and wholly just society, where all men may be of one heart and of one soul and where all things shall be owned in common. They are saying not only to the Hapsburgs, Romanoffs and Hohenzollerns but also to their industrial masters of yesterday that hereafter, he who does not work shall not eat; and that those who build houses shall inhabit them and that those who plant vineyards shall eat the fruit of them. Which of the voices will prevail? The disciples of hate or the disciples of love? Is it possible to hope that those whom the avowed Christian rulers and masters have degraded and impoverished will do unto others as it has *not* been done unto them? The most terrible product of the society in which we all live is the harvest of hate now ripening in Europe. And how like a contagion it is spreading from nation to nation! And will it arrive among us before the powerful men of the Church and State will see that the first work of Christians is to seek the kingdom of God on earth, and the first duty of rich and poor is to build the new and just society where none shall lack, and where all may be of one heart and of one soul?

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(2) Hermann Kutter, "They Must," p. 187. (The Coöperative Printing Co., Chicago, 1908.)
(3) Smith's "Dictionary," *op. cit.*, p. 454.

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